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Galleries

10 of the best 2D digital artworks

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 009 September 2006 \$4 / €3.25 / £2.25

from two influential
figures in science
fiction movie history.
From conception to
creation : Alien vs. Predator

totalTextures

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7 Shadow Maps
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2DARTIST

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Kuang Hong

Waheed Nasir

Tomáš Müller

Svetlin Velinov

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welcome Editorial

Editorial

Welcome

To Issue 9! We're still going strong and have a lot of new stuff planned for you in the next few months. We are going back to basics soon with some amazing tutorials & articles on traditional art skills. So, if you read 2DArtist every month, staring in awe at the amazing artwork then stare no longer! Now you too can learn how to create stunning 2D images from scratch!

Artist Interviews

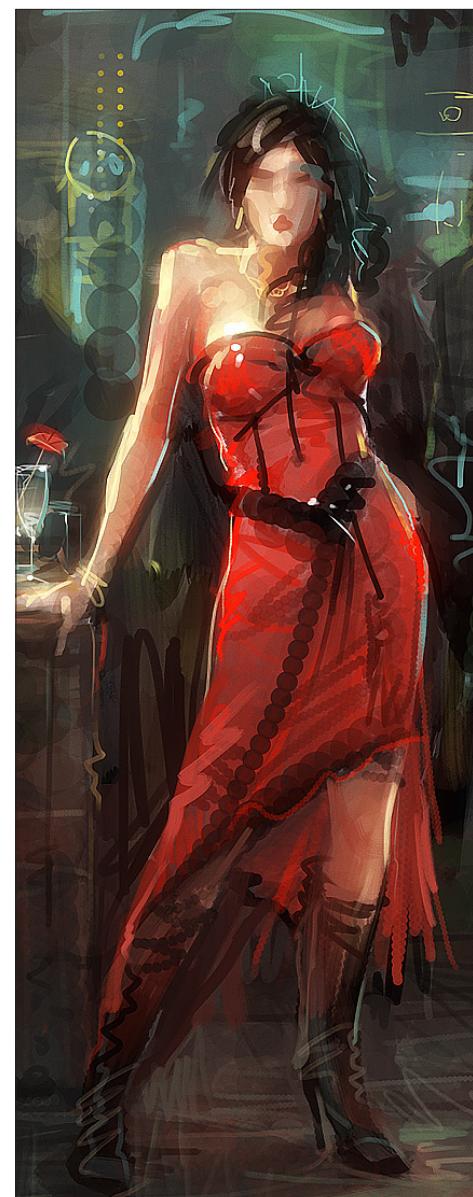
We talk to 2 Berlin based Female freelance artists this month. No coincidence intended... Benita Winckler, and Daniela Uhlig.

Tutorials

Focusing on Tutorials this month, Elements Digital Painting series gets onto the technicalities of painting Skin, Adonihs shows us how to paint a female face, and Yu Cheng Hong and Tomáš Müller show us the processes of creating their images 'Beast' and 'Mining Machine' respectively.

About us

Zoo Publishing is a new company comprising of a small team here in the Midlands UK. 2DArtist is our second magazine project following the successful 3DCreative (www.3dcreativemag.com). We are very grateful for the support of the following CG sites which have help promote and spread the word about our publications. As well as ourselves, all digital artists owe a lot to these communities for the incredible amount of work they do for the CG Industry. 3DKingdom, 3DLinks, 3DTOTAL, 2DValley, 3DM3, CGUnderground, ChildPlayStudios, DAZ 3D, 3DEXcellence, Epilogue.net, GFXArtist, the3DStudio, CGDirectory, MattePainting.org, Max-Realms and Mediaworks, we look forward to lasting and successful partnership with these CG community sites





Contributing Artists

Contributors

Every month, many artists from around the world contribute to 2DArtist Magazine. This month, we would like to thank the following for their time, experiences and inspiration.



Benita Winckler

Student / Freelance Illustrator
Berlin, Germany.



I'm usually a 2D person (very much in love with my wacom tablet and my sketchbooks) but I also enjoy sculpting and working with real materials. Designing fantasy characters and costumes is what I find most fascinating. Currently I'm doing more and more jobs for the entertainment industry. In my freetime I'm working on my graphic novel.

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Daniela Uhlig

Berlin, Germany.

I "suffered" at school for 13 years until I finally graduated, then I was educated for a job (that I won't mention now) for 3 years

which was even worse than school. However, I have been working as a graphic designer & illustrator for 2 years now and I might eventually study art sooner or later. So - to keep it short - I have loved painting since I could hold a pen in my hand and it is my passion.

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Tomas Müller

Concept artist / illustrator / Graphic designer / Freelancer > Prague, Czech Republic. I have 6 years of experience in the creative domain, especially in Graphic design, illustration, concept art and matte painting. I have studied a high school of art. Now I work as Freelancer.



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Yu Cheng Hong

Concept artist / 3D animator
Freelancer, Taipei, Taiwan.

I studied "Graphic Design & 3D Animation" when I was in Shih Chien University in Taipei, Taiwan. After graduating, I have been to Australia to study "Digital Cinematics" in the Geelong, Gorden Institute of TAFE, and also went to Auckland University of Technology to study "Animation and Visual Effects" in New Zealand.

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Emrah Elmasli

Concept artist / Digital Illustrator /Freelancer. As a Graphic Design graduate, i've started to work digitally in the year 2002. I have been creating digital illustrations and concept designs since then. I've worked with Crystal Dynamics, Irrational Games, Australia, Fantasy Flight Games, Cgtoolkit and vs. remotely. I would like to work as a Concept Artist in a video game company someday.



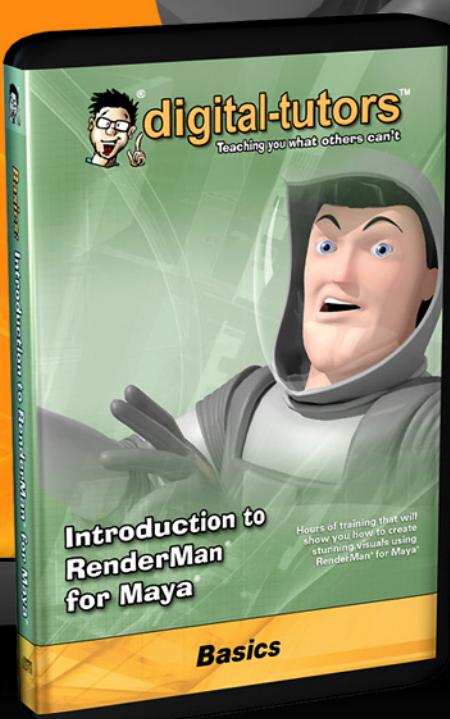
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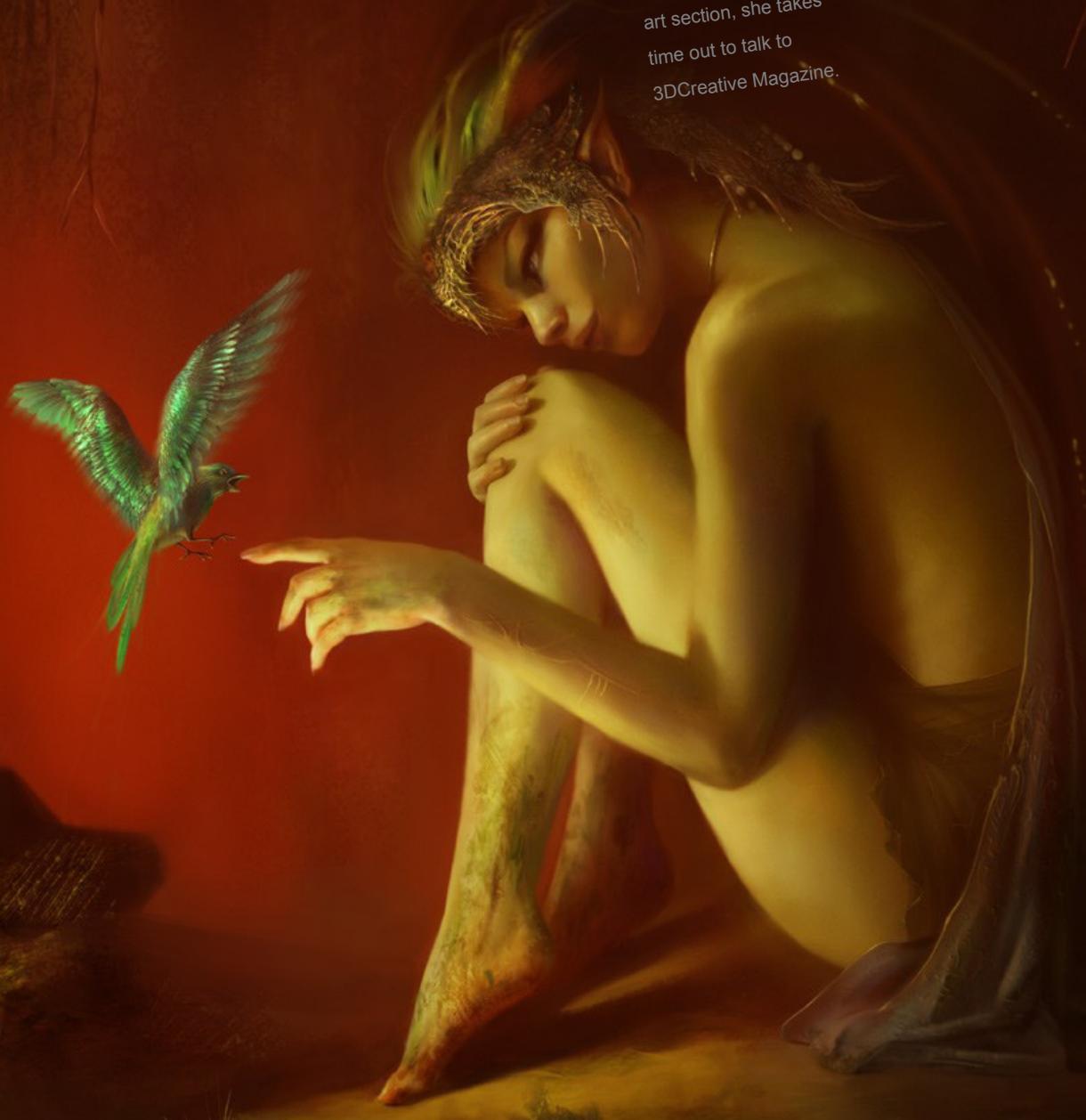
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benita winckler

Benita is a Freelance
artist and Student
from Berlin, Germany.

After recently
swapping computer
science for the fine
art section, she takes
time out to talk to
3DCreative Magazine.





An interview with **Benita Winckler**

benita winckler

Hi Benita, can you give the readers a brief introduction / biography about yourself?

Hi. Ok, where to start? I'm a student / freelance illustrator from Berlin with a soft spot for elves, cats and fantasy things. I suppose it all started with my love for costumes. I had my own sewing-machine and used to design the dresses I would wear on party weekends. Lots of black velvet, fake fur and torn up tights (just to give you an impression) I always thought I would study art or costume design, but the odds were against it. So I was studying "Media Computer Science" till a few months ago. It was intellectually interesting but on the other hand also a little dull and too demanding to allow yourself the pleasure to paint during the classes or even after them. So I finally brought that to a good end, got my life back and now I'm planning to switch over to the fine-art section here in Berlin. For what I have heard they loathe everything non-abstract or even "fantasy", so I guess I will have a funny time getting along with them. But I'm really looking forward to it.

Sounds like an interesting path you have followed so far, when I was talking with Tim Warnock in an earlier issue he was saying that there can still be some bad feeling towards digital art in fine art Universities that want to stay strictly with traditional mediums, have you come across this? And do you think it's a good idea to teach students traditionally (no computers) for the first few years?*

Umm I don't know.. Personally I don't really care if it's digital or traditional as long as the stuff is well done. The basics will always stay the same, no matter what medium you use. And yes, sure it will be much easier for a teacher (and the students) to deal with one subject after the other. First the basics of drawing,





perspective etc - then the software. It's the same with keyboards and pianos. Sitting in front of the electric version of the thing won't make you a better player if you haven't practised your scales.

Looking at your portfolio we can see you specialize in fantasy characters, can you tell us why that is?

I'm really not thinking too much while I'm painting. But I love everything with a sparkle of 'otherworldliness' to it. When the borders around this world become shine through and you begin to see little creatures lurking in the shadows. Think about the movie "Labyrinth", when the Goblin King is dancing with Sarah. All these beautiful costumes!

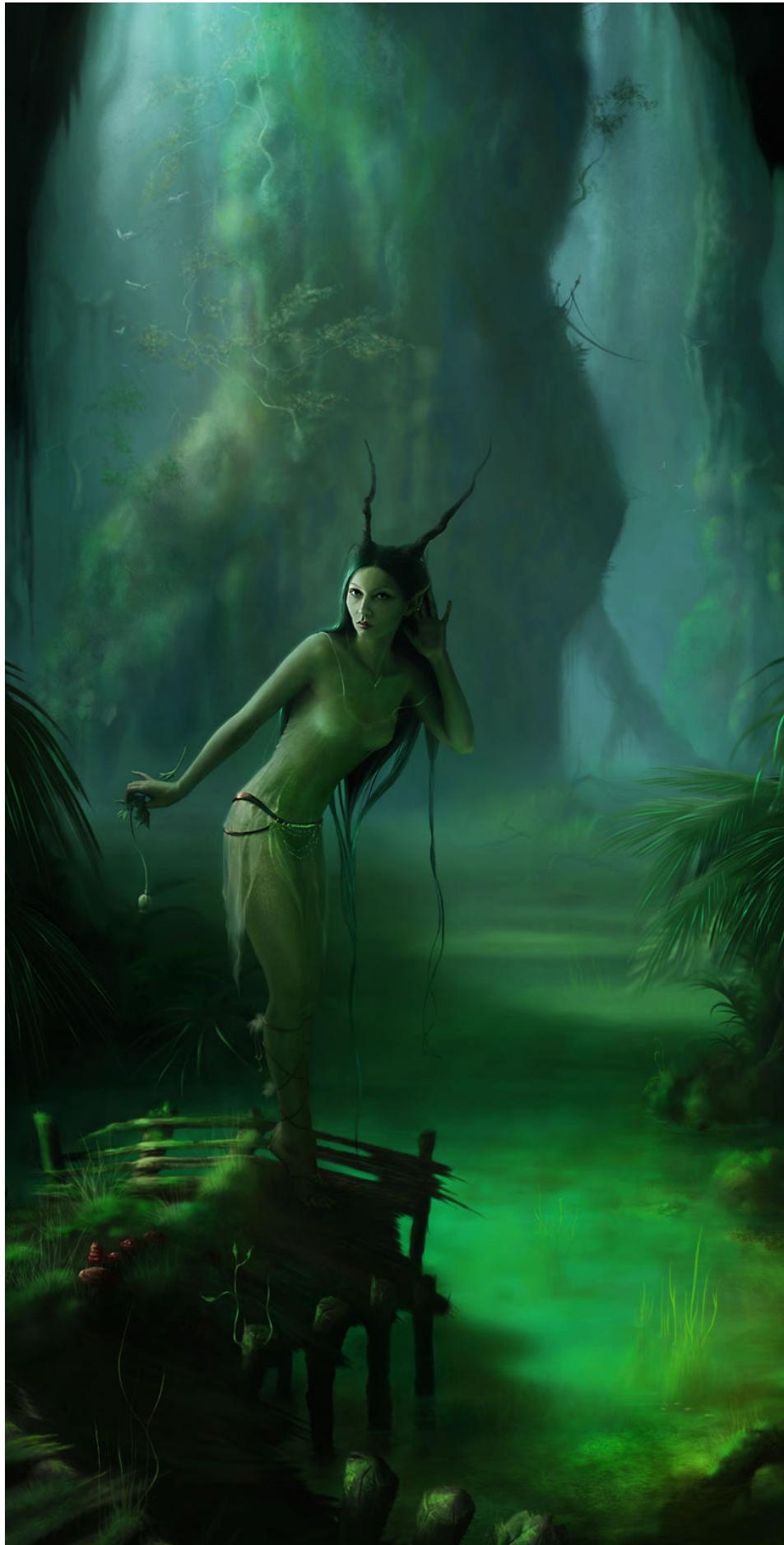
I personally find your backgrounds as interesting as the characters, they seem beautiful yet creepy at the same time! Any reasons or inspirations for these?

Thank you. I always try to not see "background" and "figure" as something parted from each other. They belong together and should be treated equally. At first I made a few mistakes with that, I put the elements on different layers





for too long, so in the end everything was 2 elements: background and figure and that way the 'connectedness' inside the image suffered a little. Now I try to merge the layers as soon as possible to make sure to always work on the whole image. Overall it's as much fun to paint the details of the environment as it's fun to paint the character. You can nearly play god, while you explore the setting. Will it be cold or warm or humid and misty? How will the grass feel to the touch of her feet? Every thought about the characters "life" outside the frame of your screen will add to the believability of the image.



The fact that the characters really belong to their backgrounds really shows though with your work, do these environments evolve and change as you paint them or do you have most of the ideas ready in your head when You start out?*

It's difficult to say. Most of the time it's just a feeling that I want to convey. So while I'm painting I'm always open for those happy Accidents when some brush strokes suddenly begin to look like steps etc.. And of course it can happen that a whole forest has to be cut Down in the painting process. If it's for the sake of the image, one has to be rigid.

Are the images in your online portfolio created purely for pleasure or do you receive commissions?

I'm receiving commissions too and they can be lots of fun to work on but normally I just love my freedom. When there are no restrictions at all and I'm just doing what I want and when. The images in my portfolio are all pleasure-pieces although Lucrezia Navarre was a commission. I usually take commissions in which I'm interested in personally, so that the work will not only be "work" but also something special.

Yes having total freedom is great, I guess the challenge of the restrictions commercial pieces offer can appeal to some too. Talking about the business side again, do you have any ideas or dreams about what you would like to do when you finish your studies?*

Right now I am doing some concept work for a small movie project, which I enjoy a lot. It's great having the chance to work with interesting people. More of that in the future would be great. And talking about dreams: it would be nice to see my graphic novel published someday.



An interview with **Benita Winckler**

Looking at your website, you divide your works into your main gallery and sketches, what is the average time period for these works that defines which category they fall into? And is it the case that a main gallery piece is basically just a polished detailed follow on from a sketch, or do they follow a very different process right from the start?

Oh, my website needs a relaunch! Never mind these division. It was an idea I had, so that I could post my quick doodles in another section than the big and polished projects. But in the end I have figured out, that I like to use my daily sketch box for the doodles and so my real "sketches" section is getting a little old and dusty.. Ah! Chaos! :D But you can say, the sketches are usually fast works, studies or ideas, finished in a few hours, some in a few days... The gallery images are big projects with more time involved. The smallest ones in there took 2 months.





Can you tell us about the software and hardware you use? Are you a 100% digital artist these days?

Normally my tools are Photoshop, Painter and my old Wacom Intuous 1. But the moment I'm leaving the house, it's back to traditional Sketchbooks and all sorts of pens.

Does your local area have some nice spots to sketch and be inspired?*

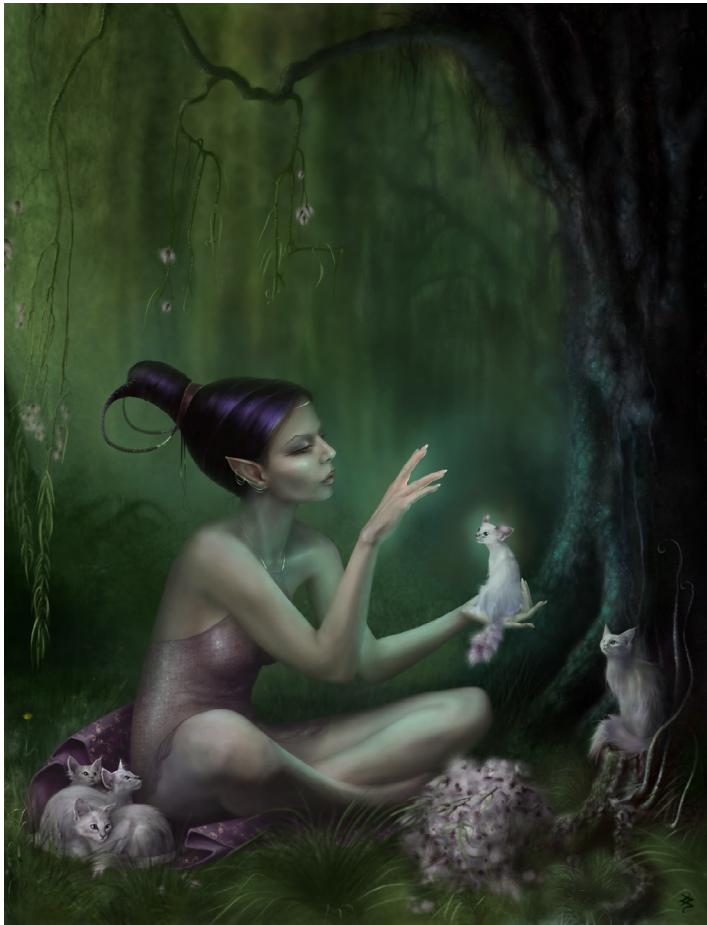
Berlin is a very interesting place to live. Lots of ruins and lost buildings if you know where to look. There is even the ruin of an old amusement park with a huge Ferris wheel and trains that haven't been used for years, all rusty and covered with weeds, surrounded by woods. And not to forget the East-Berlin TV Tower, which is actually one of the secret gateways to Aion. But this is another story...

What are the inspirations for your characters?

When I was younger I collected the "Elfquest" graphic novels of Wendi Pini. These 20 books had a big influence on me. I even had dreams where the story somehow continued with different characters and different stories and I was thinking: Hey! There are more than these 20 books out there and I didn't know about them! And I felt like finding the holy Grail or something. I get a lot of inspiration from my dreams. I grew up in a village near a huge forest and so my friends and I had the chance to spend a lot of time in an "elven-friendly" environment. At night these images somehow mix up with scenes from my favourite movies or ideas from books and form new symbols.

When you're not drawing what do you like to do?

I started Kendo last year and enjoyed it very much. But at the moment my life is too unpredictable to commit myself to this art form. It's one of these things which you can't do just like that. It needs 100% attention. But as soon as things are back to regular again, I'm sure I'll continue with it. Whenever I find some time I'm writing on the story for my graphic novel. Computer Games are great for relaxation and



so is spending time with my friends. I love art supply stores, books and our local coffee bar.. But normally I'm more of a workaholic.. I get nervous if I sit around too long doing "nothing".

Well whatever you are doing Benita we wish you all the best, as long as keep painting your fantastic art that wows us all that is. Many Thanks for your time, it's been great speaking with you.

Benita Winckler

You can see more of this artists work at:

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Interview by : Tom Greenway



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Daniela Uhlig

is a 24 year old Graphic designer and artist living in Berlin, Germany. At the moment she is working for a big firm with around 500 employees, where she is busy designing and creating wallpapers and screensavers. We spoke to her about the unusual, and sometimes quirky, digital art that she creates...

>>



DANIELA



Can you give our readers a short introduction please; age, location, employment etc.?

My name is Daniela Uhlig, I'm 24 years old and I live in Germany's capital, Berlin. At the moment I'm working for a big firm with around 500 employees, where I'm busying myself in the graphical field; designing and creating wallpapers and screensavers.

Are you self-taught? Or did you attend college? I haven't studied anything in the artistic field, but I have been painting all my life, on ordinary paper and canvas for the first 21 years of my life, then, because of my job, I had to learn how to paint digitally. I was placed in front of a PC with Photoshop running and was told to go and learn how to handle it. And that's what I've been doing for the last 2 years: learn, learn, learn, every day! At some point, I started painting in my private time, and roughly a year ago, I think I made the largest progress because, through the influence of a number of art communities, an





ambition arose in me.

Do you believe in 'talent' or is just daily practice of drawing shapes and forms?

I believe that one can learn many things about graphics by practice; drawing clean lines, hatching, chromatics, composition, a basic understanding of anatomy and so on. But these are merely techniques; they don't automatically amount to a good picture. I think a certain measure of talent is involved. There will always be a difference between great technique and real talent; without talent one will sooner or later reach one's limits. I'm not so sure if I've actually got a specific technique. I'm still experimenting a

lot, just painting from the top of my head. During lunch breaks I often sit in a café with a pencil and some paper, and then an idea pops up sooner or later. I make a sketch, run off to the scanner and begin to just paint colour over the scanned copy. I let my feelings take control over what I'm doing in these moments. I haven't yet arrived at the point at which you can start planning what goes where and why.

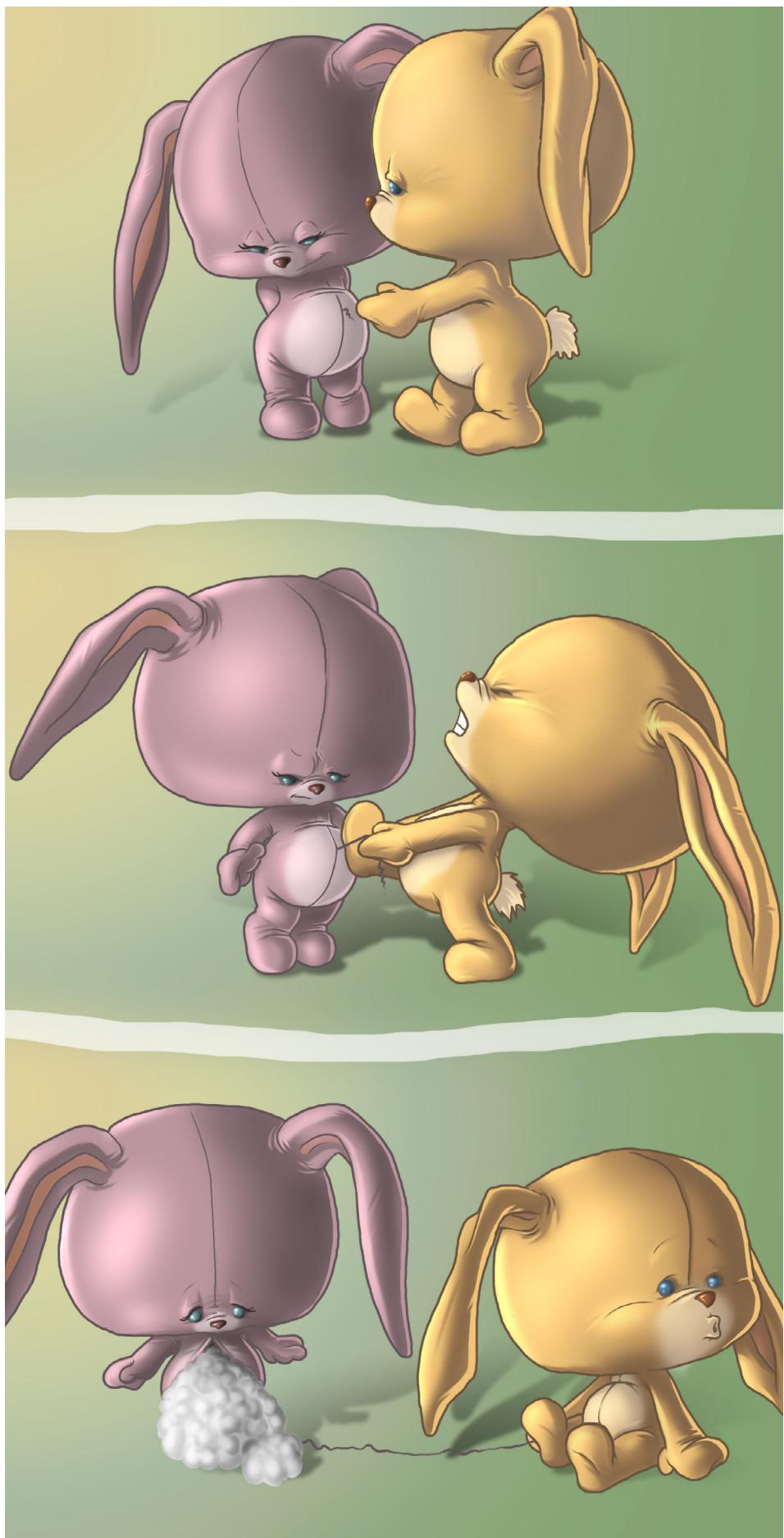
Do you have your own drawing techniques or tips for us? If yes, please tell!!

As for tips, I don't actually know how to answer this. I don't think I should give general tips, apart from just one: avoid shadowing using the colour black!

Do you have a 'zone out' time, where you try not to think about your work at all? Or, are you the kind of lady who lives for her work all the time? As far as I can see, every one of your images is cartoon based, why is this?

Hmm... When I'm actually not painting I'm still always thinking about it, directly or indirectly, even when I'm out with friends. It may happen that I ponder a new idea or go through a work I had previously begun. Or I collect impressions unconsciously, i.e. look at objects, see how light falls on them, where, what, how and when they cast a shadow and the effects they have on colour. But sometimes, I take a break and completely relax. I have my little rituals to make myself completely and thoroughly focus on nothing.

Well, not everything I paint is actually cartoon-based, but I admit that a lot of it tends to go in that direction. It's basically a style in which you can run riot - you can paint a great deal of things; funny, romantic, perverted, sick, nasty, mean - without them being as extreme as they would be in a naturalistic painting. There are simply more possibilities when you're not limited to reality - you're not constrained to proportions and so on. Sure, I like painting naturally as well, but it isn't half as much fun!



Combining cuteness with an evil nature on very cute and simple cartoon characters seems to play a very important part in your images. How do you go about planning your drawings?

Ok, I guess this question refers to small dreadful animals? They emerged more or less by chance, and I have only created a couple of them because people liked them and they thrilled them. They only take a little time to make, as they are drawn quite simply, and they are a way of getting a break from complex paintings, a kind of stop-gap.





What or who are your inspirations for this subject?

You see, the ideas for these things come very spontaneously most of the time. I stroll around, look at people and wonder "what if...", suddenly I burst out laughing and 'bang!' - there's the idea.

Then I sit down at the computer, make a basic sketch, draw clear outlines and paint them up.

What are your plans for your future career?

Oh boy, that's by far the most difficult question to answer! I haven't a clue! I sure want to stick to the graphic field for the rest of my life but if that will be my job for just as long, I really can't say. I do often think about taking up studies, but not necessarily to make a living out of it, rather for self-realisation and out of a thirst for knowledge. I've always thought there's so much to know and wanted to quench that thirst. But since I've been working for 3 years, going to university would be a financial step backwards now. I'll probably think about it for some more time and save up some money, before I make up my mind. Maybe I'll get that supreme job offer... Who knows?!

Thanks for your time
Daniela! It has been very great talking with you!

Daniela Uhlig

You can see more of Daniela's work here:

<http://www.du-artwork.de>

Or, you can email her at:
libita@hotmail.de

Interview by : Warin Pismoke

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in 1978 HR Giger created a world in which belonged one of the most feared monsters in Cinematic History. Nearly 30 years later the Alien 'Xenomorph' returned to face the ultimate battle with Stan Winston's 'Predator' in AVP, the long awaited movie translation of the cult Comic Book. We take a look at how 2 'middle aged' concepts still amaze and inspire artists and audiences worldwide...

AVP BY PIERFILIPPO SIGNORE

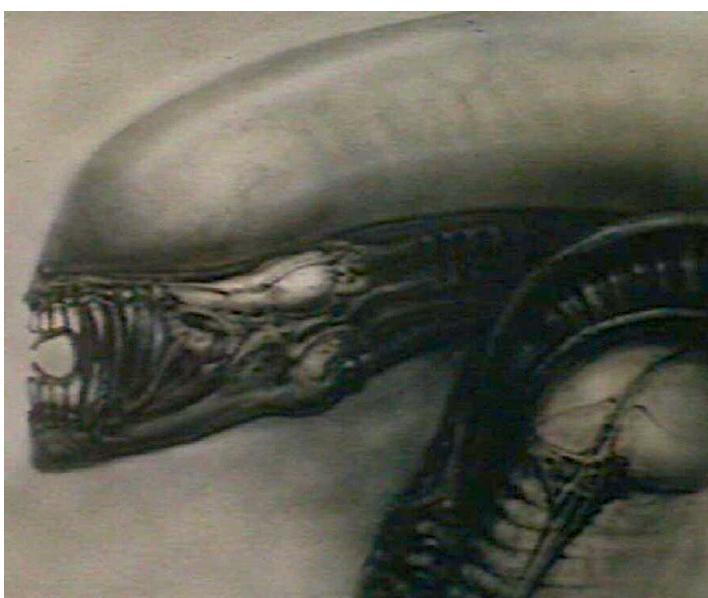
ALIEN OF FEAR



The Concept of Effir

BY PIERLUIGI SIERI

Both the "Xenomorph" and the deadly extra-terrestrial hunter the 'Predator' made their on screen partnership a reality in the 2004 movie Alien vs. Predator directed by Paul W.S. Anderson, and the relationship between them could not be more deep rooted. Long before the release of the Alien vs. Predator movie, in which the 2 characters (now owned by 20th Century Fox) are slung into fierce battle against each other, the Aliens, born of the fantasy of the surrealist Swiss painter H.R. Giger and the magician of special creature effects wizard Stan Winston, have been the individual stars of 6 movies. Beginning with 'Alien', directed by Ridley Scott in 1979 and winner of the Oscar for the best special effects created by Brian Johnson, Nick Alder, Denys Ayling, H.R. Giger and Carlo Rambaldi, 'Aliens' (1986) directed by James Cameron (of 'The Abyss' and 'Titanic' Fame), there then came the 2 predator movies 'Predator' (1987) and 'Predator 2' (1990), before we saw the return of the "Xenomorph" in 'Alien3' (1992) directed by David Fincher (Fight club, Se7en) and Alien: Resurrection (1997) directed by French Director Jean-Pierre Jeunet (Amelie, Delicatessen and the most recent 'Alien Vs.



'Predator', steered by the capable marketing strategists from 20th Century Fox. As a prequel to the film, we have seen the Xenomorph Alien creature battle with the Predator in at least 9 cartoons published by Dark Horse Comics and this has also spilled over into at least 5 videogame licences on home and arcade machines. There have also been 3 'Batman vs Predator' comic strips, however there seems to be a longer standing and fiercer rivalry between the 2 Aliens that they have even had Action Figures, collection puppets, the comics of the Dark Horse mentioned above and the real-time strategy, first-person shooters for PC CD-Rom and the Microsoft Xbox and Sony Playstation 2 (Alien versus Predator: Gold edition, Alien vs. Predator 2: Primal Hunt and Alien vs. Predator



Extinction, developed by Rebellion, Sierra and Electronic Arts for the Fox Interactive). So, why does the Alien fascinate us so much? Certainly, for H.R. Giger's very original creative vision of both 'biomechanic' and 'insectoid' coming together, loaded with asexual allusions, in which the organic parts meld with seemingly machine and vice versa. Add to that the sheer terror and fear which the creature can generate from its appearance alone and then throw in a frightening reproductive cycle which evolves in all four movies, and you get the beginnings of a creature created with one purpose; to terrify worldwide cinema audiences! 'Alien' was always intended to be a dark and anguishing film, the creature is the perfect metaphor for our unconscious fears, and has changed for ever in such a radical manner the way in which we conceive aliens in general, and the way that Sci-fi movies are made. So, if that's the case for the



Alien, then why does the 'Predator' have the ability to almost amuse? With less of the seemingly mindless destructive capabilities of the Alien, the relentless hunter from another planet, plays with his enemy in the same way a cat plays with a mouse. This behavioural code almost forbids him to persist attacking defenceless creatures or adversaries who are not at the same level. This was delicately illustrated in Predator2, directed by Stephen Hopkins in 1990, where Leona, a female police officer in Los Angeles is almost killed, and then saved by the Predator after he scans her body and discovers the heartbeat of a foetus, revealing that Leona is in fact in an advanced state of pregnancy. And who can forget the face of an amazed Danny Glover inside the Predator spaceship, perusing the Predators 'trophies' hung up around the internal walls of the craft. Look carefully and you will also notice the head of the Xenomorph Alien! Visually extraordinary and with the same 'beast hunts man' formula which has since been replicated over many films, the Predator created by John Mc Tiernan in 1987, with Arnold Schwarzenegger and its sequel Predator 2 were able to maintain suspense at the limits of human endurance and also managed to say something new and not banal about the fear of the unknown. So it was inevitable that the two more famous monsters of science fiction were to end up meeting each other. However, Before we plunge into the movie 'AVP', it's interesting to go back in the time and revisit the special effects which originally gave life to "Xenomorphs" and "horrible monsters", to use the exact words of Lieutenant Gorman of U. S. Colonial Marines in Aliens and of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Major "Dutch" Schaeffer in Predator. What amazes us for certain is the progress made in special effects from 1979 to today. To give life to the creatures, every little trick was utilised, from the rubber-suits, to cable-actuated controls, from camera tricks to John Hurt's fake stomach, which actually used fake blood pumped up plastic tubes over the real entrails of animals aquired from the local butcher. By the time Alien: Resurrection was





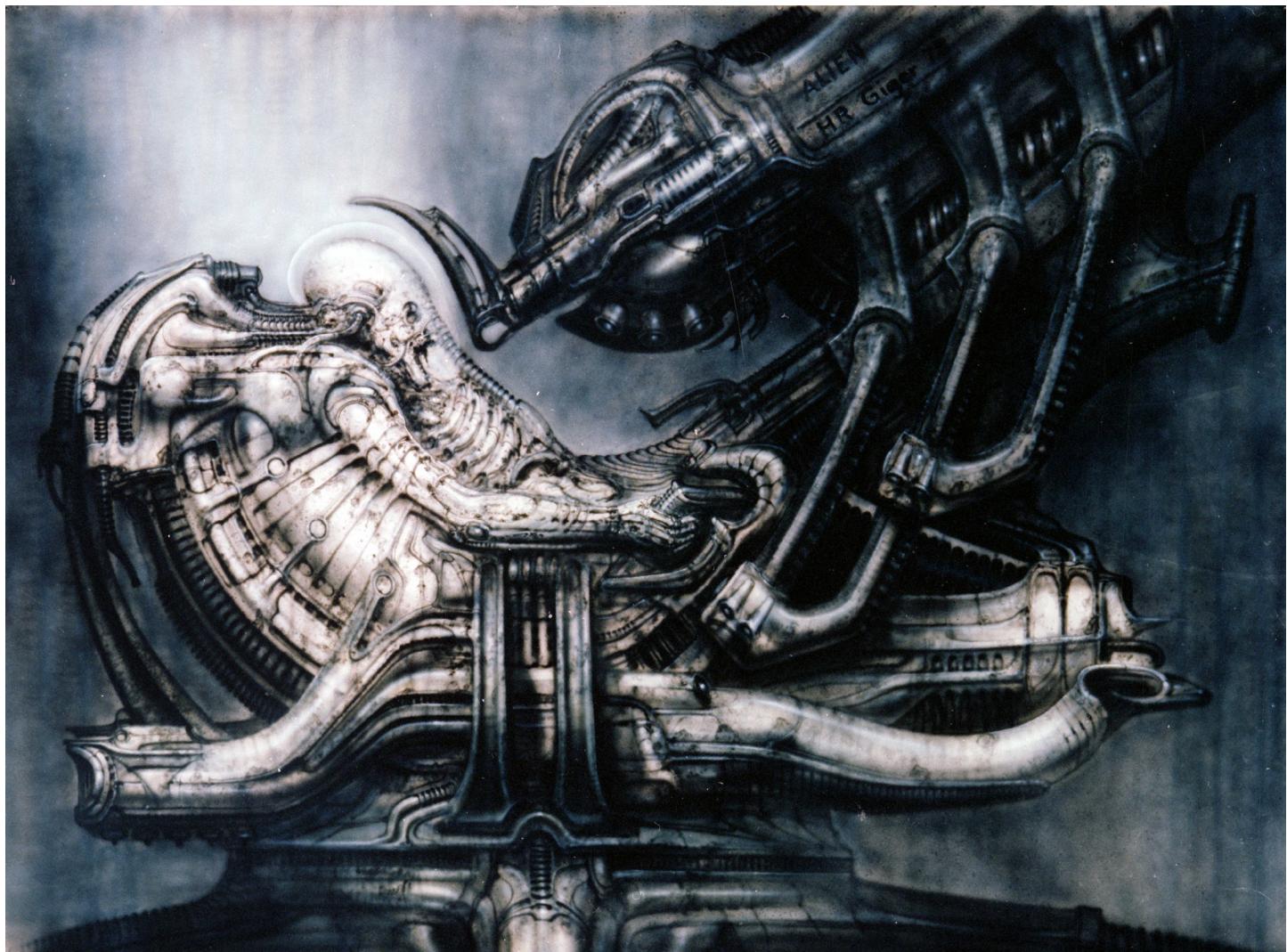
made, the first film of the quadrilogy that makes use of digital effects, they were using 3D scans, modelling and animation software, thousands of Aliens in CGI worlds and digital skeletal structures of the warrior Alien animated using hundreds of joints and many controls using Inverse Kinematics. These are not new technologies any more, but not many film Series' have made it through such as technologic transformation and still come out looking like the original in so many ways. This is purely down to great and original design at the concept level. The Alien of 1979 was played by Masai Bolaji Badejo, His role as the title character was practically tailor-made to suit him. Badejo was a young African design student when he was

picked up from a bar by Ridley Scott. He was as big as Scott wanted the alien to be: at least two metres (6ft 7in) tall. In fact, he stood at well over 7ft. It was Scott's intention to create a monster that looked as if no human could be behind the mask. It was to be long and angular, with an impossible frame that only a few men would be able to fill. Badejo filled the role. The Italian Carlo Rambaldi, winner of 3 Oscars for the remake of King Kong in 1976 directed by John Guillemin , Alien and E.T. The Extra-terrestrial by Steven Spielberg, realized the mechanical head, worn by Badejo like a helmet, with the second interior retractable mouth controlled by cables. The sculptor and modeller Roger Dicken, active in television and in the cinema

since the 1960's on the puppet series Thunderbirds, was charged with creating the "small alien forms" for the famous "chest-burster" scene. The idea being that the creature is implanted into a living host organism and once it has grown enough, comes tearing out of the hosts body. The alien eggs were created by Nick Allder. The supervisors of the special effects Brian Johnson and Nick Allder worked together in the television series Space: 1999 and were interested not in supervising the model photography, but also by the physical special effects realized on the set during shooting. Brian Johnson already had a strong two year experience in the industry, with the special photographic effects unit for 2001: A Space



Odyssey by Stanley Kubrick. He had decided on a very "low tech" approach for the space sequences using miniatures, as the budget would not allow for blue screening and camera motion tracking technology. The four miniatures of the commercial space vehicles U.S.S.C.S. 'The Nostromo', the lifeboat capsule 'Narcissus' and the derelict Alien spaceship on the planet 'Acheron', were created by modelmakers Martin

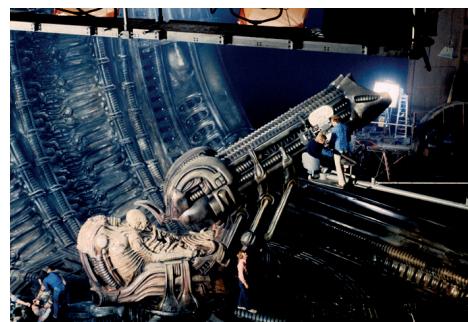




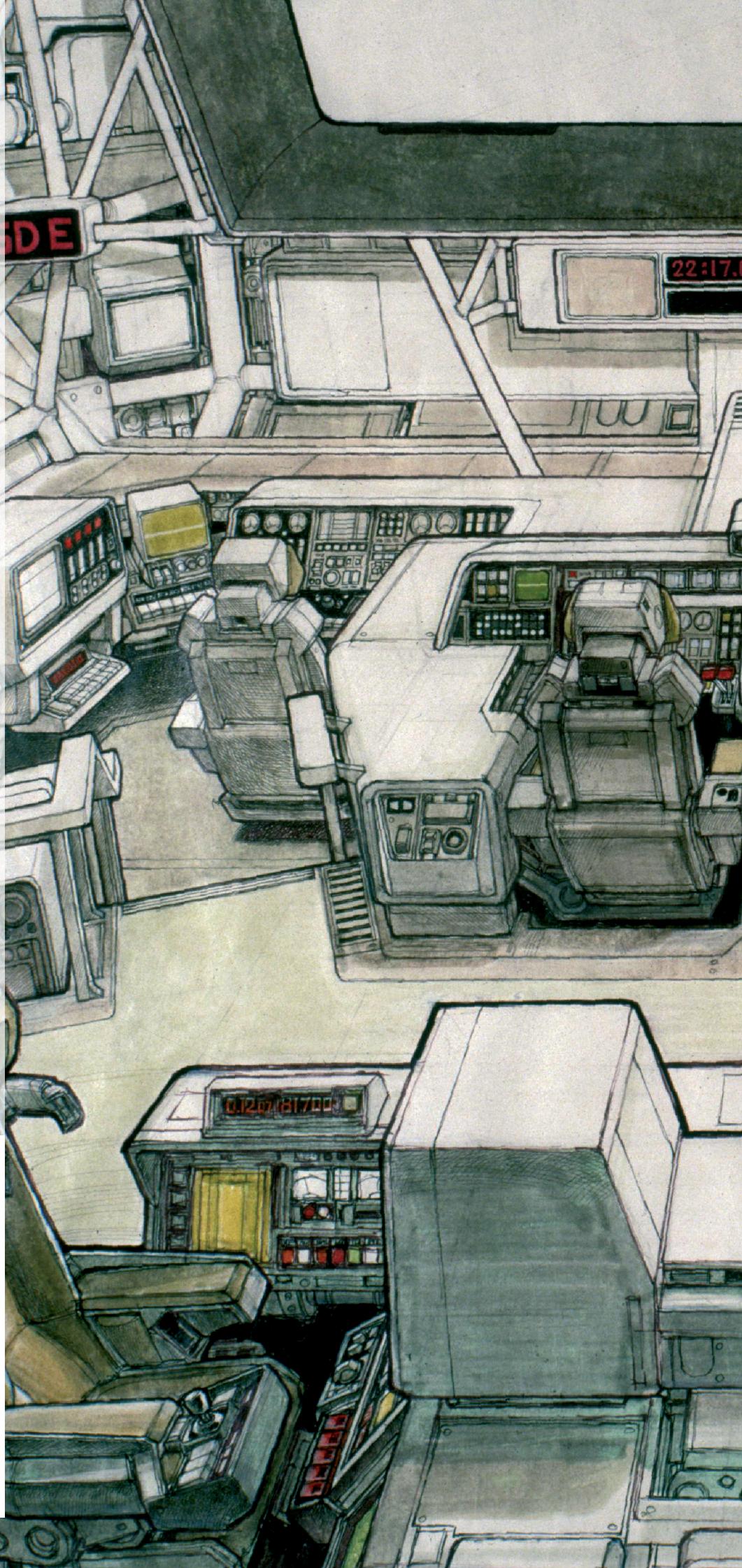
J. Bower and Bill Pearson, using plastic forms of EMA, Perspex sheets and an incredible quantity of tiny details coming from commercially available model-kit boxes. During modelling they used over two hundred kits of the Airfix Space Shuttle and German tanks from the famous Japanese model firm Tamiya. The miniatures were suspended from the ceiling of the studio or mounted on heavy supports of steel covered by black velvet, invisible when the correct exposure was obtained during model photography with the camera itself on a little dolly to create the spaceshi . The stars were added in afterwards.

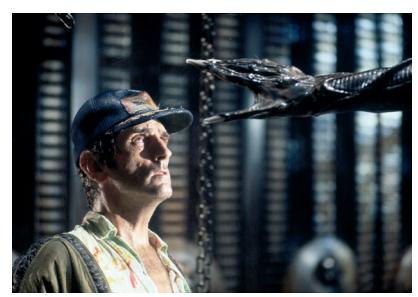
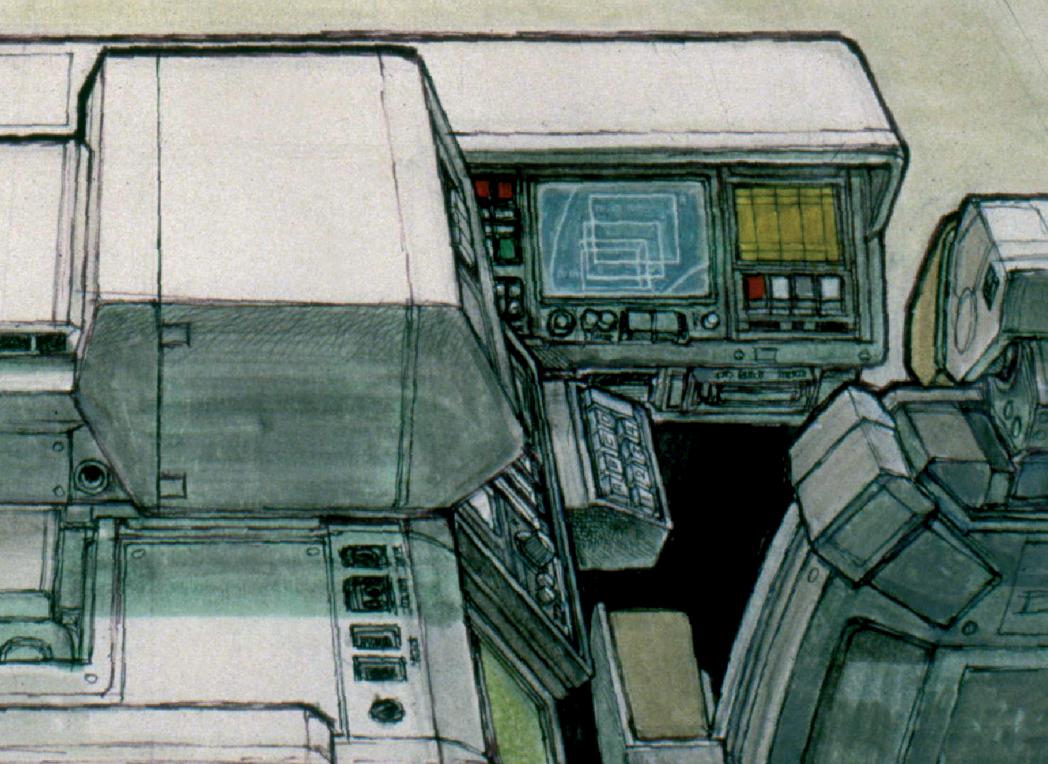
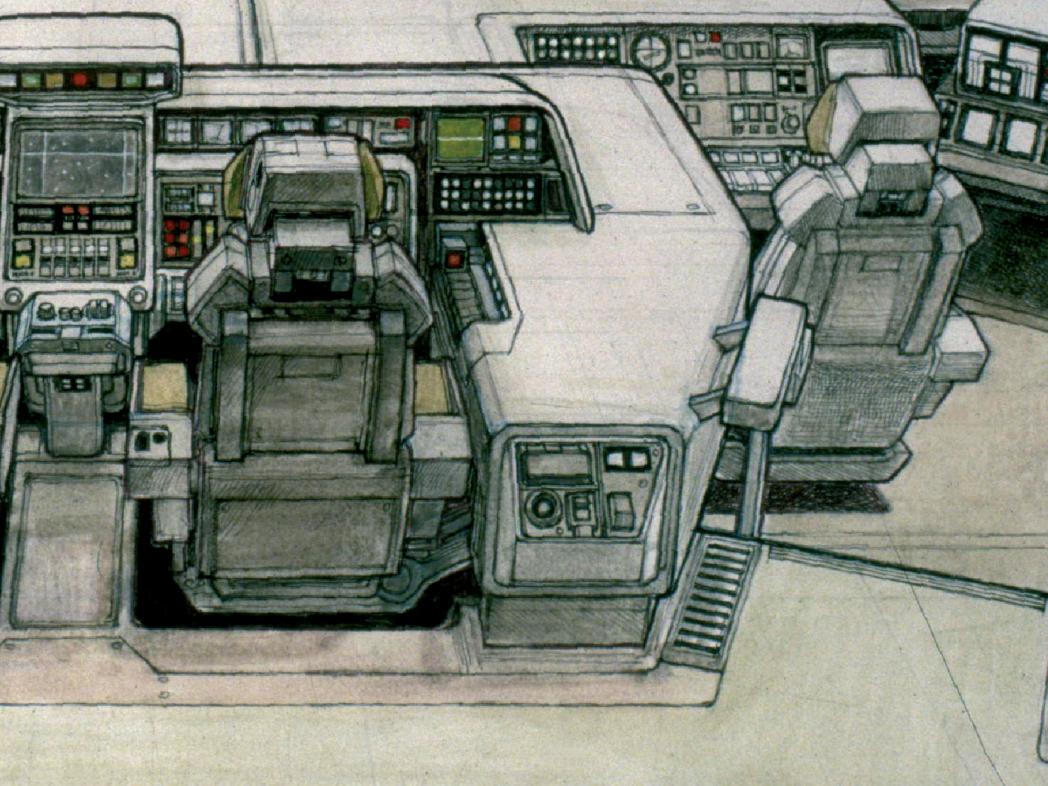
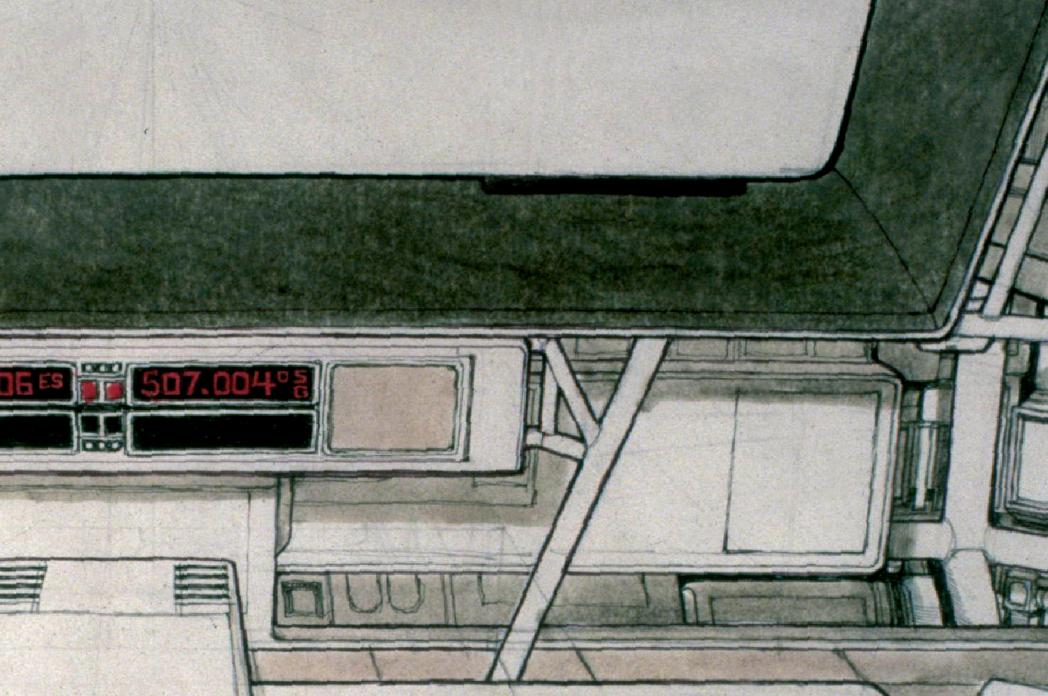
To show the actors inside the Nostromo and Narcissus cockpits, it was necessary to build some larger sections of the spaceships in 1/24 scale, big enough to contain small television-screens on which the actors were shown. On the surface of the alien's planet, modellers and sculptors employed real Animal bones to mould the rocky formations around the alien derelict spaceship, which was created from expanded polystyrene covered by EMA plastic tubes and plasticine so as to sculpt the external details. The planets of the stellar system toward of which the Mother computer deviates The

Nostromo, were white plastic spheres on which were projected slides so as to obtain an three-dimensional. The matte-painting of the egg chamber was created by the artist Ray Caple, who has created Matte Painting for other huge blockbuster films such as 'Superman' (1978), 'Brazil' (1985) and 'Batman' (1989). Several years after 'Alien', the producer and director James Cameron who in the past had been an art director, miniature creator and operator for movies such as 'Battle Beyond the Stars' (1980) produced by Roger Corman and Escape from New York (1997) by John Carpenter, succeed in

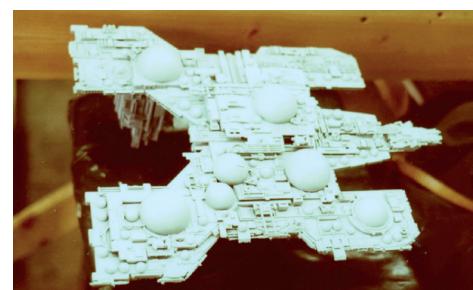
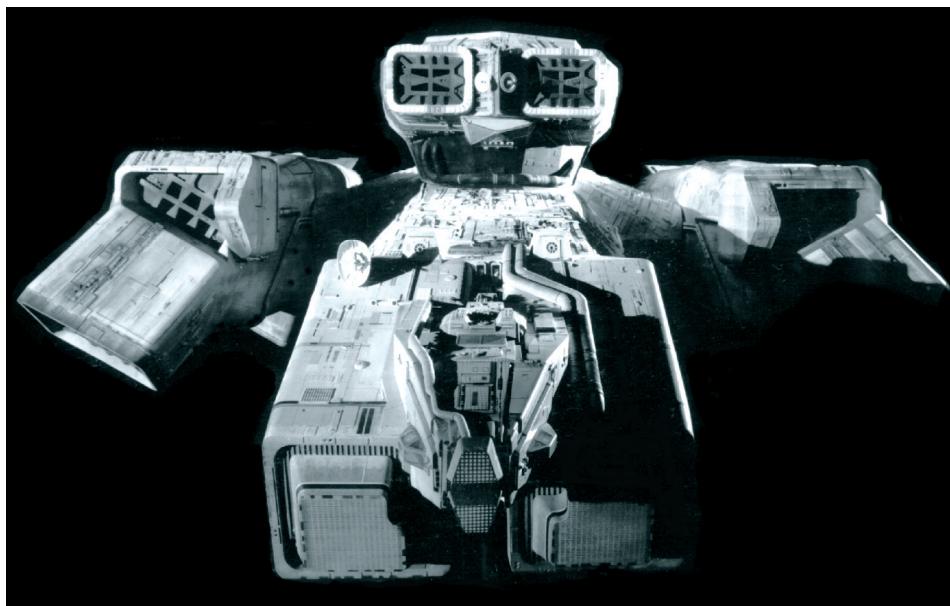
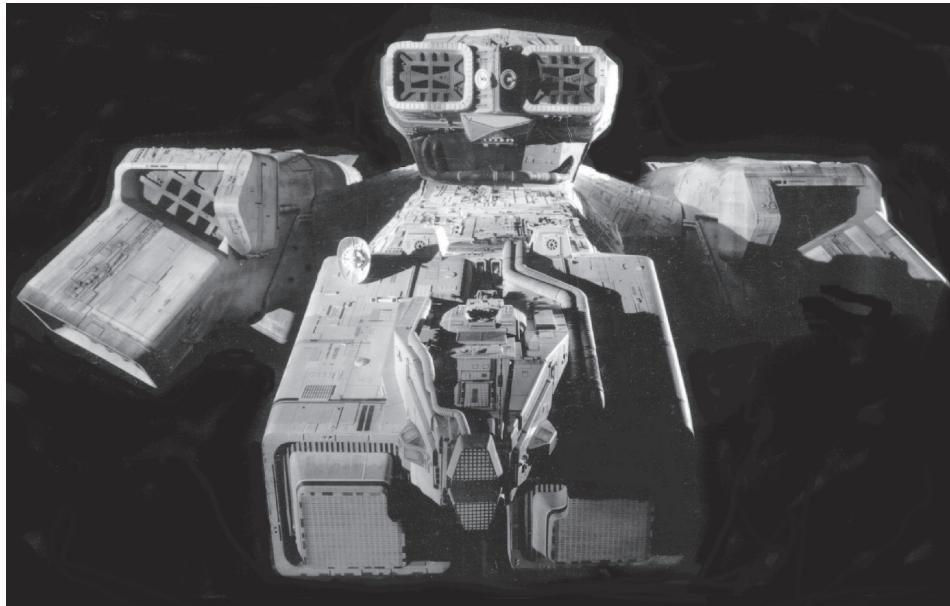


interesting the 20th Century Fox and Brandywine Production in his story for a possible sequel of 'Alien', entitled 'Aliens'. Lieutenant Ellen Ripley is asleep for 57 years in one of the hypersleep capsules of the lifeboat Narcissus, which is found drifting through. Once back on earth she presents her report about the death of the crew, equipment and the destruction of the stellar cargo U.S.S.C.S The Nostromo, but isn't believed by the Weyland-Yutani Corporation. In the meantime, on the same planet where the Ripley's companions had originally found the derelict alien spaceship, human colonies have been established. When the communications from these colonies suddenly stop, Ripley, escorted by the U.S. Colonial Marines, venture back to the planet to investigate. The film, lead again by movie-star Sigourney Weaver, discovers that there are now hundreds of the Aliens as opposed to the single attacker she had defeated on the Nostromo. This meant that production costs were going to be much higher than in Alien, especially as the special effects that Cameron wanted to give the realization were going to be so complicated. He immediately employed brothers Robert and Dennis Skotak of the L.A. Effects Group headed by Creature legend Stan Winston. The shooting for the film took place in London, UK in the historical Pinewood Studios and the film was eventually rewarded with an Oscar in 1986 for ingenuity and creation, practically having used all existing techniques in the 'book' of special effects. The terrestrial





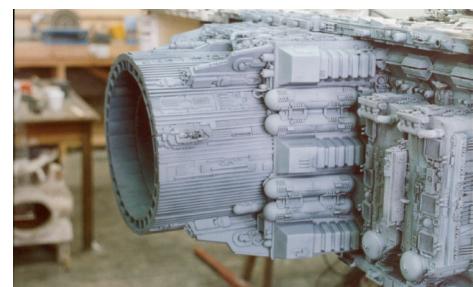
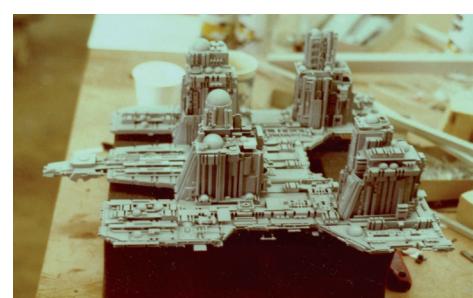
colony on the LV-426 planet Acheron was a miniature built in sections, so that one or more sections of itself, could be reconfigured according to the requirements, behind that was a matte painted backdrop. For the scene where an alien attacks the pilot of the Drop-ship UD-4L "Cheyenne", the landing shuttle of the Marines, the model effects technicians used a wire-rigged suspended model. For the vehicle carrier troops M577 APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) there was a full scale version for the actors and also a Radio controlled model "piloted" by an operator out of camera view. Although the Skotak brothers favoured effects which didn't require blue screening or camera effects, it was evident that many shots of the spacecrafts in flight, required long and fluid camera moves which couldn't be obtained without motion-control cameras controlled by computer. After large scale arguments with the L.A. Effects Group over whether to use blue screening or full model sets, they left the project. Veteran Brian Johnson, double Oscar winner for both *Alien* and *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* was called in while he was on holiday in the Caribbean, to complete the work with his studio Arkadon Motion Control. The gigantic military carrier spaceship U.S.S. Sulaco, the lifeboat Narcissus (rescued when the film begins) and the landing Drop-Ship 4D-4L were photographed with the motion-control system in England just in time to start the final cut of *Aliens* in the editing

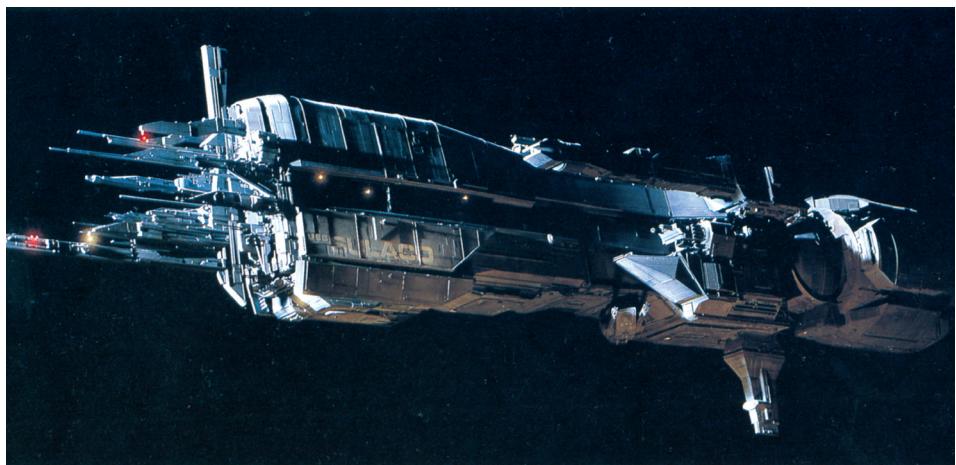
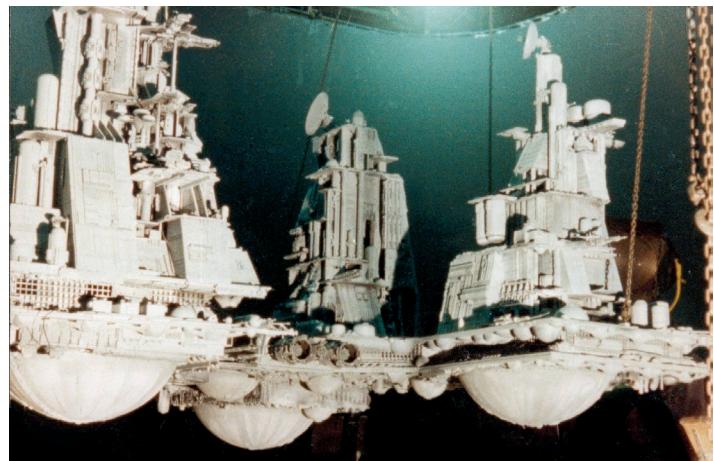
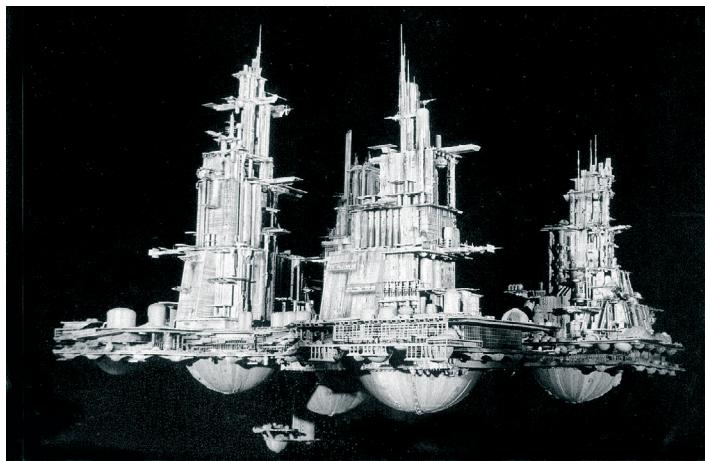


room.

However, now, we not only had 1 alien but now 10 evolutions, including the eggs laid by the Queen, the big Queen herself and the "chest-buster" thorax-breaker, Stan Winston and his collaborators created a series of economical costumes applying in some alien parts, so as to allow to the stuntmen total liberty of movement. There has been a noticeable improvement in respect to the original full-body suit built by H.R. Giger for the first chapter of the series. For close-up shots of the details, Winston and the rest of the technicians used a head and a trunk controlled by cables, for a better result when

compared with the head of Carlo Rambaldi. The Queen, operated by two people inside the body, some technicians out of camera view and a huge steel structure of support, not in the shot, to support the enormous weight of the creature. For the final battle between Lieutenant Ellen Ripley in the Caterpillar P-5000 Power Loader and the Queen, the props in the scene are all full scale 1/1 and so too is the alien creature. They have been replaced in certain shots by cable-controlled miniatures built by Doug Beswick and Phil Notaro. It's almost unnecessary to try and underline how the presence of the alien warriors have ever been more threatening, due mainly to the exceptional

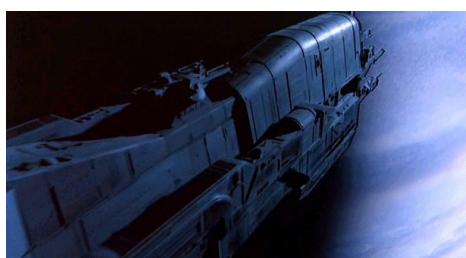




technical realisation and the photographic ability of Adrian Biddle.



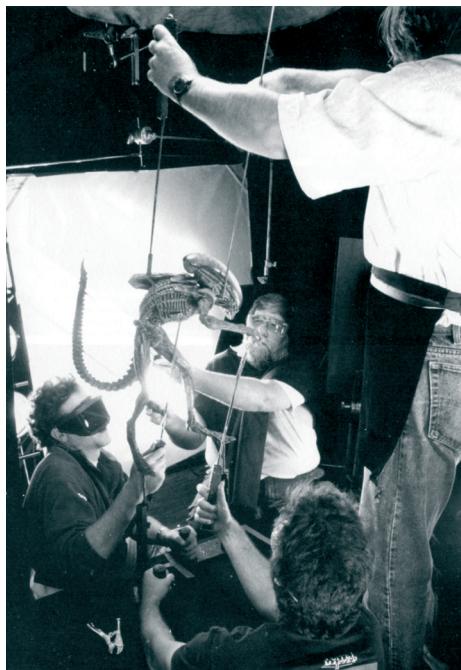
The next year, in 1987, 20th Century Fox made 'Predator' directed by the talented John McTiernan (Director of Die Hard, The Hunt for Red October, Mata Grosso, The 13th Warrior and the unlucky remake of Rollerball). Predator is the story of a U.S. Special Forces unit sent to a central American country to save both the crew and the passengers of an helicopter shot-down by guerrillas. After the battle against the revolutionary forces, the group of the major "Dutch" Schaeffer has to face a new and apparently invincible enemy: the Predator, a powerful extraterrestrial hunter equipped with hi-tech weaponry and protected by a cloaking device capable of rendering himself almost completely invisible. The Predator's facial design, which seemed to be the amalgamation of an abyssal fish, a crustacean and an insect, was again a creation of Stan Winston's studio that also had to create



not only the full-body suit, worn by the gigantic Kevin Peter Hall, but also the accessories like the helmet, the ray gun mounted on the shoulder and the medical kit. With the four tusks, the facial mechanism allowed the opening and closing of the mouth. Also, they created a fluorescent green blood, able to ooze from the predators wounds. As well as the excellence of Stan Winston for the realisation of the creature itself, the Predator success was also due to the visual effects produced by the talented R/Greenberg Associates of New York as well as Dream Quest Images, for the opening space-shot with the Predator ship entering the Earth atmosphere and for certain matte-paintings. The Predator cloaking device developed by the R/Greenberg Associates consisted of ingenious optical trickery, replacing the hunter silhouette with a bi-dimensional effect constituted by the repetition of distorted background images in a concentric manner, one inside the other. The electrical sparks caused by the accidental contact of various Predator equipment with



Concept Art *Alien Vs. Predator*



water, were animated manually such us in a 2D cartoon. The "thermo-graphic" vision given by the visual apparatus of the Predator's helmet allowed him in addition to look for body heat-signature. Effects were increased in number in the sequel Predator 2 in 1990. More 2D animation effects, more weapons such as the flying "frisbee" complete with cutting blades, the snare or the long extensive lance used against the cruel Los Angeles drug lords (that the alien hunter chooses to kill instead of the police officers because they appear better equipped and more dangerous) but, definitively, more Predators in the movie finale when the stubborn Danny Glover playing the part of Lieutenant Mike Harrigan defeats his adversary after a hard battle. With only two movies, the Predator series seemed to be concluded, although the franchise then preserved the name during the following years in comics, videogames, models, playthings and generic gadgets. In 1992, 20th Century Fox then decided to continue the legend of 'Alien' with the 'Alien3', directed by David Fincher, author of Seven, Fight Club and Panic Room. The action takes place on the remote 'penal colony' planet 'Fury 161'. In the sea of which crashes the EEV,





one of the lifeboats of the spaceship U.S.S. Sulaco while it was on its way back to Earth, The only survivor on board (from the survivors of the 'Aliens' film including Newt, the corporal of the U.S. Colonial Marines Hicks and the android 'Bishop') is Ripley. Tom Woodruff Jr. and Alec Gillis (creature effects coordinators on Aliens) continued to use H.R Giger's original concept, albeit with a few changes such as the removal of the four 'protuberances' on the Alien's back. Richard Edlund, former-Industrial Light & Magic visual effects supervisor, produced the miniature effects and the matte-paintings of the planet and the furnace. In Alien3, there are very few shots of the U.S.S. Sulaco and not more than four or five of the EEV's flight into space, but the great innovation introduced by the technicians of the Boss Film Studios was the technical application in order to animate the alien to give the impression of the swift and deadly assassin that it is. In fact, a puppet was used, controlled by some blue sticks (rod-puppet), steered by 4 or 5 operators and photographed using motion-control cameras in

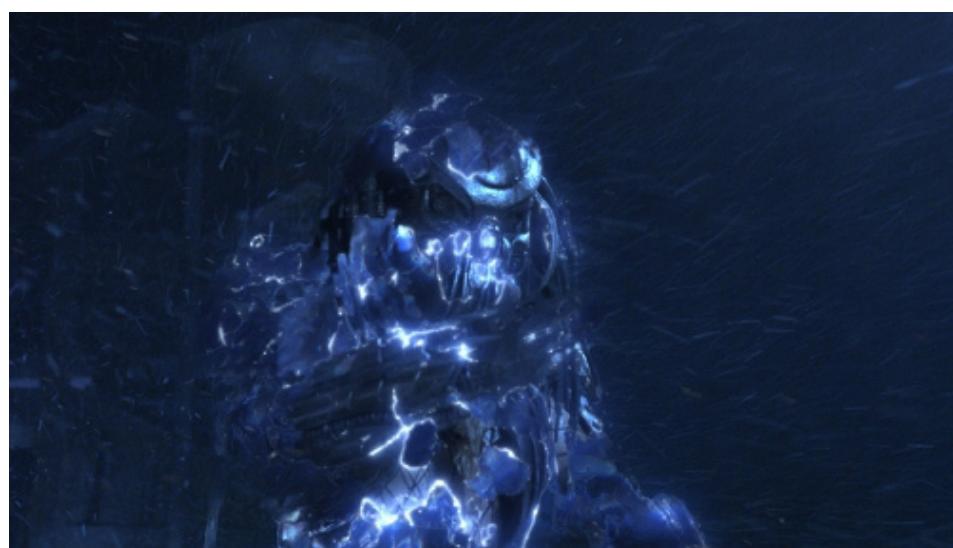


Approved Predator Armor - Front View



AMP DESIGN PHASE

PREDATOR ARMOR 074
GILLIS/WOODRUFF 7/30/03

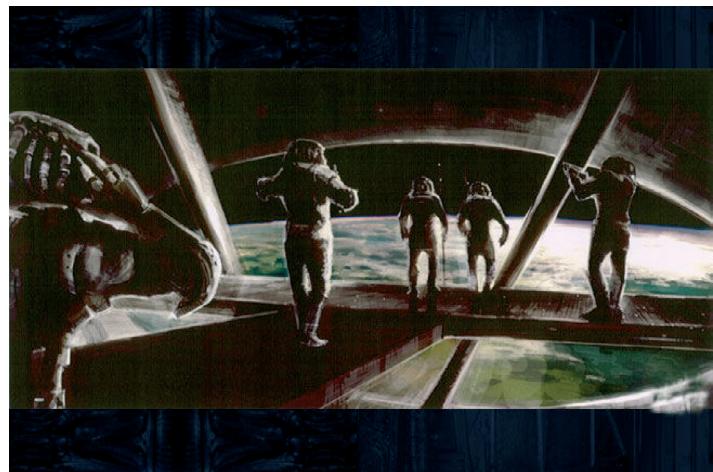




front of blue-screens for tracking purposes, vital for the matching of the camera's movements with the ones performed on the live-action set. Jim Rygiel, Oscar winner for the best visual effects in the Lord of the Rings trilogy and during that time responsible of the Boss Film Studio's computer-graphisc department, was tasked with generating the alien's shadows on the pavements and the walls or to add, thanks to particle systems, dust and fog present in the atmosphere for certain shots of the planet's external environments. With Alien: Resurrection in 1997, directed by french filmmaker Jean-Pierre Jeunet. The story is moves 200 years on, after the sacrifice of Ripley on Fury 161, when she lept into the furnace in order to kill the Alien inside her and destroy the race of Xenomorphs forever. Now Ripley has been cloned for a military secret experiment, from drops of her blood found on board the spaceship Auriga. However, as the new alien lifeform has been born of a woman, the DNA has been crossed and once again new aliens creatures were required. Again, Tom Woodruff Jr and Alex Gillis, now of the Amalgamated Dynamics Incorporated (ADI) worked on the creatures and again, thanks to the enormous progress of CGI, Blue Sky Studios and Blue Sky /VIFX (known today for the CGI animated movies Ice Age, Ice Age 2 and Robots, two of them directed by Chris Wedge) developed and animated a 3D CG model of the alien warriors, used especially for the underwater sequences where they demonstrate unexpected swimming abilities. A computer-generated Alien model was also used for the shots in which one of them emerges out of the water, striking a service ladder of the spaceship Auriga and then climbs up in the lifeboat of the Auriga killing the crew. Alien resurrection is best remembered, even if it wasn't a box-office smash hit, for the sequence of the discovery of Ripley's malformed clones in the laboratory of the spaceship, and for the NewBorn's birth, a creature with it's own genetic features of the human being and the alien's one, too. Ian Hunter and Matthew Gratzner of the HGI or Hunter-Gratzner apart



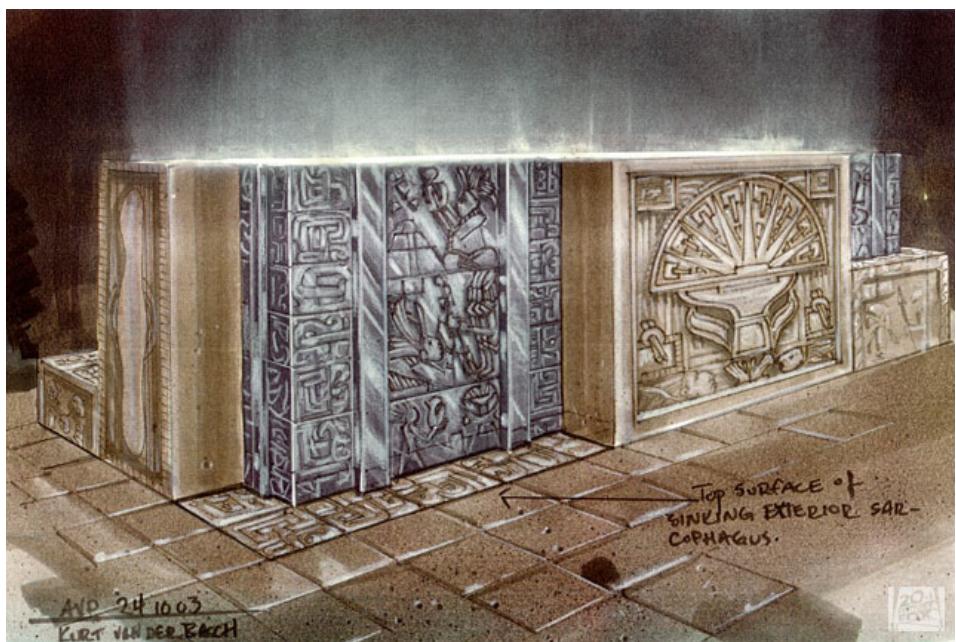
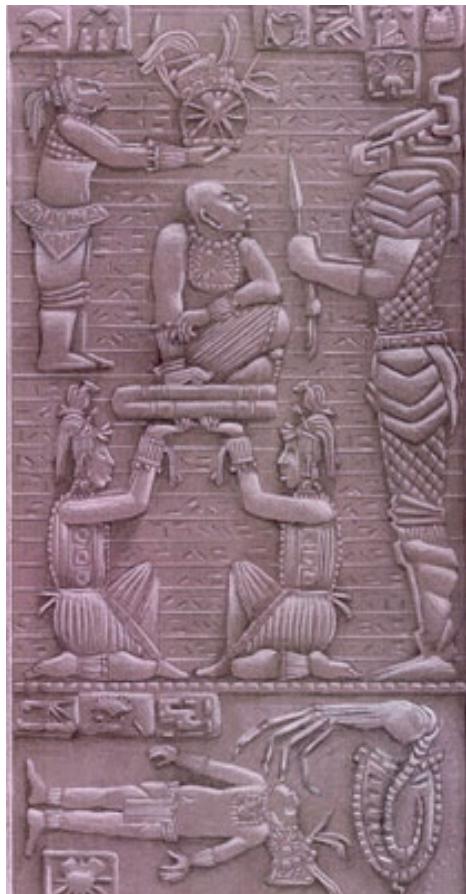
Concept Art *Alien Vs. Predator*





from the U.S.M Auriga (United Systems Military), a big model in scale 1/1.000, 3 meters 65 centimetres with approximately 10,000 to 15,000 optical fibres inside using halogen lamps for the rocket engines. Two models in scale 1/32 were photograph together to show the shuttle Betty and the Auriga's docking bay. The sophisticated motion-control equipment for the miniature photography in front of the green-

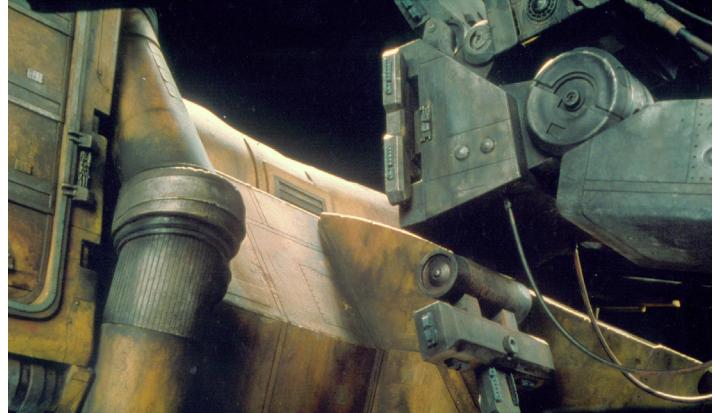
screen was supervision by Erik Henry and Joe Lewis, (developer of the system of visualisation EncodaCam used for I, robot). The Parisienne digital effects facility Duboi, directed by Pitof (director of the interesting Vidocq and of the disastrous Catwoman, starring Halle Berry) a long-time collaborator of the filmmaker Jean-Pierre Jeunet. supplied 19 artists, based in Los Angeles to complete the matte-paintings and





compositing work for 133 shots, all done with the proprietary software Dutruc installed Silicon Graphics workstations. The matte-paintings, beautifully created by artist Jean-Marie Vives (who had worked with Jeunet on Amelie and the fantastic 'City of the lost Children'), were used to extend both the miniature and full scale sets.

For year after Alien: Resurrection, rumours plagued the media regarding the possibility that 20th Century Fox would produce a cross-over movie of Alien and Predator, a kind of "final battle", in which the two alien races would be faced in a neutral territory. Dark Horse comics, and the videogames of Fox had already represented the conflict several times

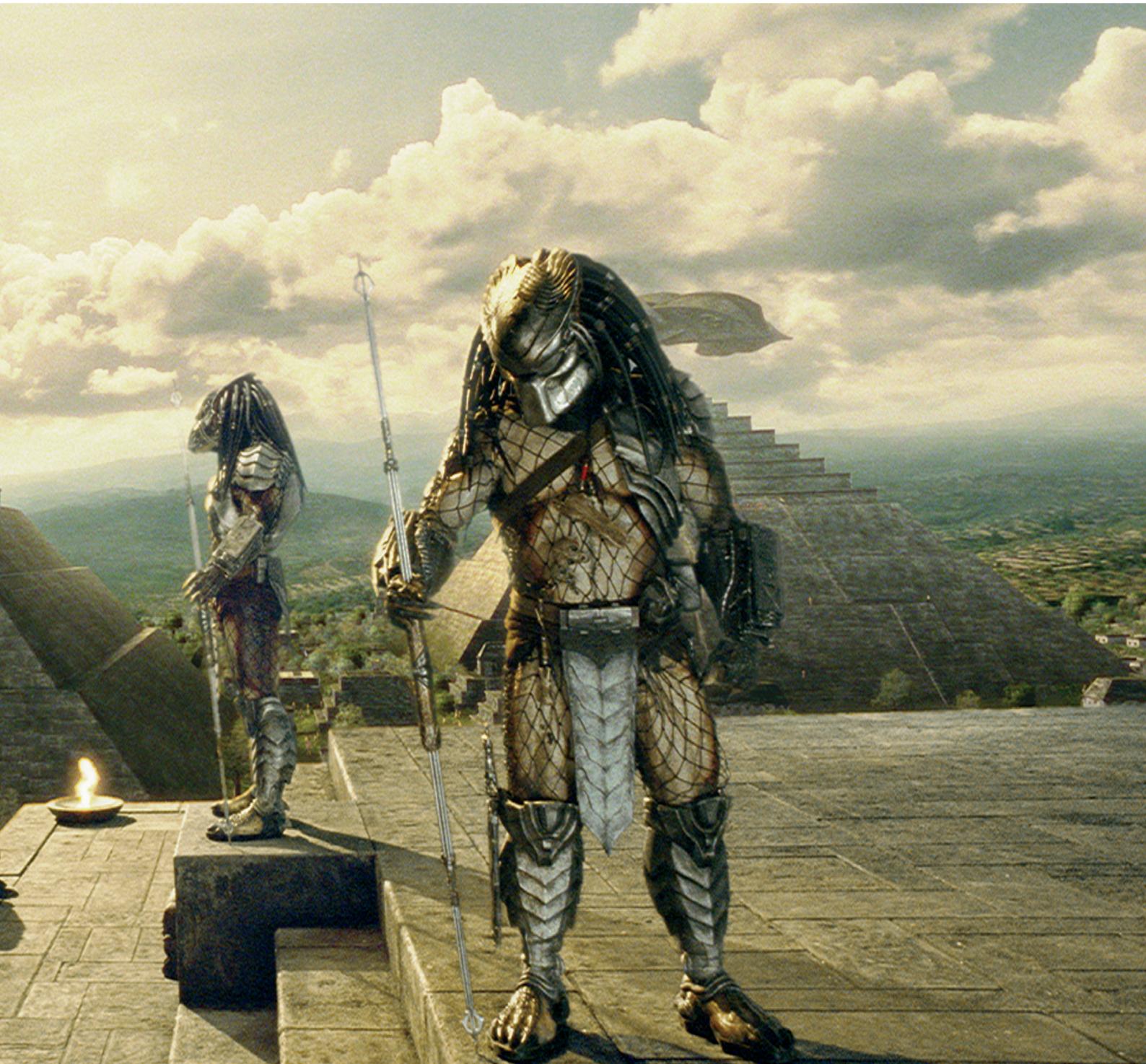




before, but until the debut of *Alien vs. Predator* no one would have been able to guess how it would or could end. Set in the early 21st century on Earth, Charles Weyland, an industrialist billionaire, leads an archaeological expedition in Antarctica. Using thermal imaging satellites, Weyland believes to have discovered the ruins of an ancient pyramid temple that predates the Egyptian and Aztec pyramids buried under the ice. Once inside, the team finds the remains of humans with holes in the rib cage and the remains of facehuggers, meaning that the possibility of the temple being uninhabited is very unlikely. To make matters worse, a group

of teenage Predators are coming to the temple to perform a coming-of-age ritual that involves fighting to the death with the aliens. Soon, it becomes clear that only one species is getting out alive. British director Paul W. Anderson had already demonstrated a certain familiarity with the horror sci-fi and fantasy genres with movies such as *Mortal Kombat*, *Event Horizon* and the first *Resident Evil*. But Anderson, fully aware of the expectations of the battle between these two movie giants, and also need for a fully believable battle, was faced with the choice of the traditional method of actors in suits or CGI. With realism of the creatures in

mind the safest choice was both as full-body suits and animatronics but this obviously limited the movements of the creatures. But at the same time he wasn't totally convinced about an approach at 100% in CGI. So, the choice taken was to entrust the Amalgamated Dynamics Incorporated (ADI) of Alec Gillis and Tom Woodruff Jr. with the realisation of the alien, including the "face-hugger", the "chest-burster", the Queen and the eggs, and the Predators. Using digital effects to replace and improve the animation of some parts of the creatures body or to recreate the historical battle between the predators and some 16,000



xenomorphs. Supervised by John Bruno, The Moving Picture Company (MPC), Framestore CFC, Cinesite (Europe) Ltd, Double Negative of London and a unit dedicated to the miniature photography based at the studios of Prague, have produced all of the digital effects used in *Alien vs. Predator*. MPC's efforts included the digital creation of torso, tail and legs of the Queen and the warriors. Scans of the entire creature brought the polygon count to over 4 million, in an effort to keep the biometric details from Giger's initial designs. Paul W.S. Anderson was desperate to maintain the original design of the Alien, keeping true to the biomechanical

look of the Giger design, established in the first two movies of the quadrilogy, it changed with a dog-like posture in *Alien 3* by Fincher and was last upgraded in *Alien resurrection*. With the models complexity growing, to get the designs into a 3D CG state that could be rigged and animated the models were scanned using 3D scanners at high resolutions. The next step was to import these details into the software for the assembly and the export of the relative geometries in Maya polygonal files, the leading 3D modelling and animation tool of Alias, now Autodesk Media and Entertainment. The Queen was finally composed of 20,000 polygons,

a warrior Alien composed of 85,000 and a Predator 50,000. During the rendering time, Pixar's Render Man converted the polygonal models into Subdivision surfaces or Sub-D. These are surfaces created by a technique that places itself somewhere between polygonal modelling and NURBS modelling. This allows the software to automatically subdivide a polygonal mesh in such a manner to obtain the final form, giving smooth and well defined curves, perfect for the Alien creatures.

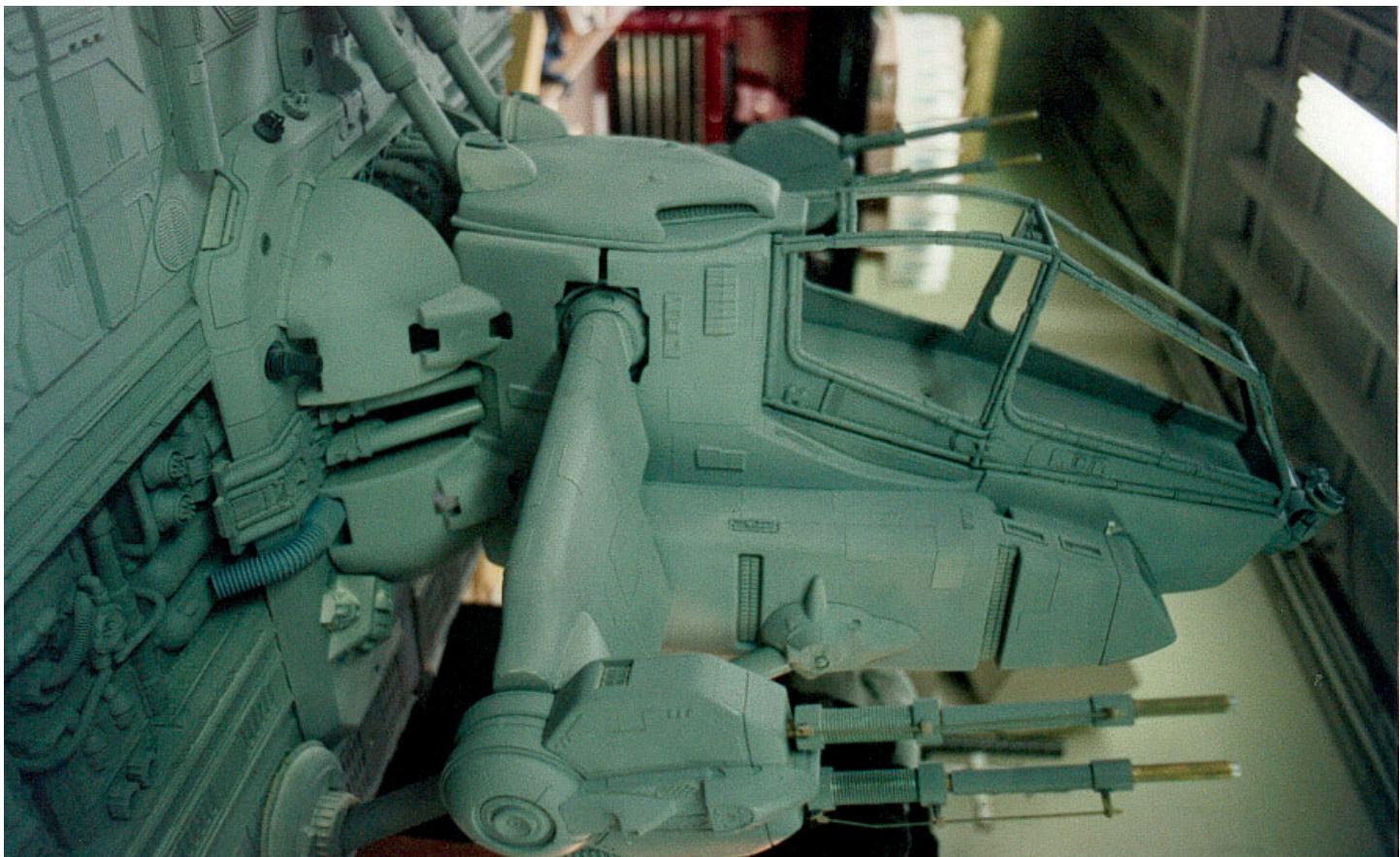
Meanwhile, Cinesite (Europe) Ltd was occupied with creating the digital face-huggers which

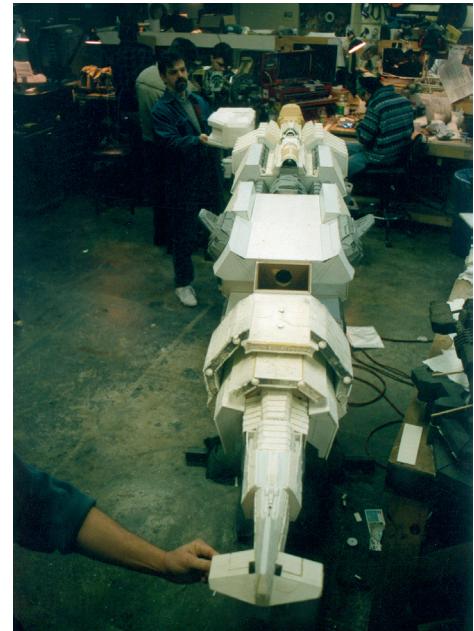


Concept Art *Alien Vs. Predator*



are hatched from the eggs laid by the Queen and then attach themselves to the face of their victim. The difficulty was in getting the Face-huggers to make those 'sudden bounds', thanks to a skill they have of using the spring of the long tail, allowing them to cover short distances by flying through the air. In the original 1979 film, the effect was decidedly very low-tech, and obtained by filming the mechanic puppet inside the eggs first, then filming it on the face of Kane and then by editing the different frames in a very fast final cut. At first, Cinesite received one the "face-hugger" full-size props built by ADI to scan into the software Cyslice in the form of a 3D Maya model. Photographs of the real object, taken on the live-action set





in Prague, served as visual references for texture maps and for lighting the CGI counterpart, modelled by pieces through the Subdivision surface with Subsurface scattering for the translucency of the external skin. The interior rig, important to animate the digital face-hugger, has been recreated in startling complexity giving full control so that, various versions of each shot can be provided to the director to match the live action shot elsewhere. One of the most striking animations was when a face-hugger leaps over a Predator which in turn reacts, killing the alien parasite by launching his blade weapon. For the face-hugger divided in two in mid-air by the Predator, Cinesite utilized real elements, 2D particles effects and 3D geometry, for which physical references of the interior organs, meats bought from the butcher and also vomit. Nevertheless, the iconic moment of the Alien vs. Predator movie, beyond the CGI aliens, shall remain the battle on the top of the pyramid that sees the two opposing races, just a few Predators against 16,000 digital Aliens. For these shots, MPC used the new crowd simulation software called ALICE, developed for



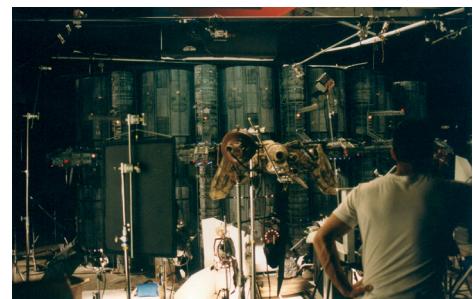
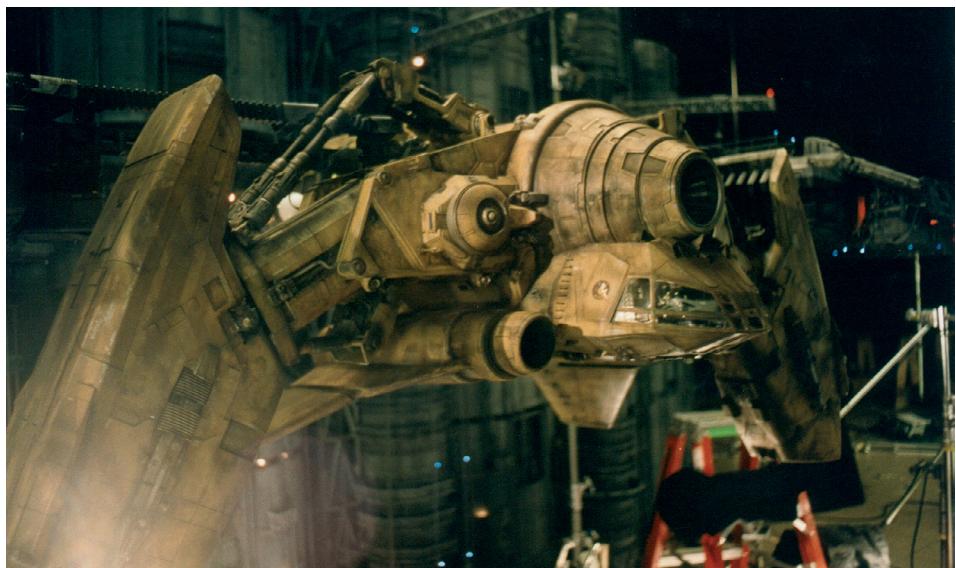
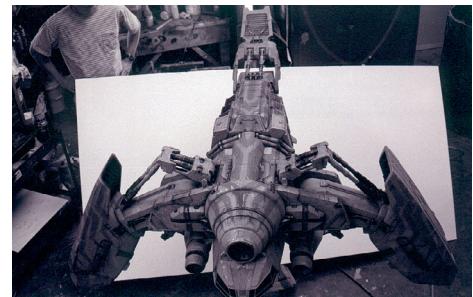
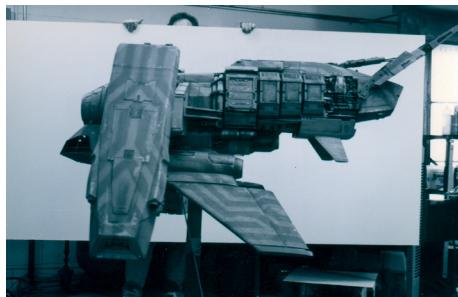
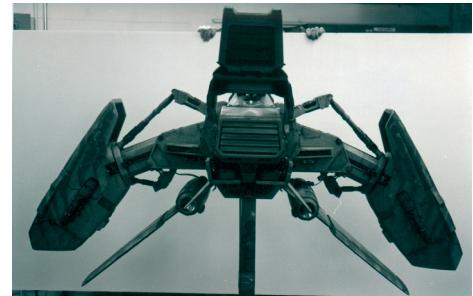


Concept Art *Alien Vs. Predator*

the colossal epic *Troy* by Wolfgang Petersen. The artificial intelligence of ALICE, working in Maya, simulates the brain of each "agent" Alien by the creation of a network of nodal interconnections in which a knot is a sensor or a rule. The sensors allow each agent to relieve information about the area around him like, by title exemplifying, the presence of other agents or the degree of the terrain inclination where he acts. The sensors can be audio-visual but can also be understand too. It is then possible to establish rules based on their function.

When the general movements of the digital crowd have been established, the next step is to add the details. The motion-capture sessions were carried out in a specific manner so that every digital character being a part of the action possesses a wide range of complete actions and movements. This function of the software to generate the digital crowds is called MLE , "Motion Library Editor", or EMILY and works under a unique and innovative idea, developed with success of MPC. The basic theory consists of taking an arbitrary volume of motion-capture details about the movements and the EMILY provides subdivisions in short animated clips of a maximum duration of 8 to 12 frame's of each other. Having imported thousands of them, EMILY then compares them with the position of the characters skeletal structure and then decides which can be and which cannot be utilised to create a logical movement.

Apple's Shake was used by Double Negative for compositing. The work done by Double Negative mainly focused on the cloaking effect and the Predator weapons. The extra-terrestrial technology allows them to remain practically invisible, if stationary. During motion, the Predator's presence is perceived as an effect or trace of the image to link in with the original optical effect of *Predator* in 1987 and *Predator 2* in 1990. Double Negative created a new technique for the "cloaking" and the "decloaking" thanks to the modern technologies of digital graphics. Double Negative 3D supervisor, coordinated the replacement of the props used





by actors and stunt-men with CGI replicas after the application of markers so as to track the movements in the set. The artists at Double Negative were also tasked with the sequence of the stone-bridge on the precipice crossed by two humans pursued by an Alien, in reality a partial set on a green-screen extended with digital matte-paintings and 3D geometries. During the AVP finale, nuclear charges activated by the last

surviving Predator destroys the pyramid, the eggs and all alien warriors except for the Alien Queen. The creature then pursues both the hunter and Alexa in the whalers station, while the icy crust collapses for the explosion. Here, visual effects supervisor John Bruno chose to make use of almost all effects techniques like mechanical miniatures, pyrotechnics, CGI Alien Queen, animatronic creature with CGI moving tail, compositing and practical effects. But at last who won this ultimate alien war? Maybe an AVP sequel is still to be produced but this time we can say that winners are the effects guys at MPC, Framestore CFC and Double Negative. It is heartwarming to see that even in the modern era of computer generated imagery



and technology movie at such a fanatical rate, that 30 year old concepts are still causing artists to break the boundaries of the technology which they use every day, and create yet more stunning work to amaze and inspire us.

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"ZBrush has initiated a renaissance on sculpture. It's the first and only sculpting software that gives the artist freedom to work creatively without the constraints of conventional modeling packages also eliminates the need to work with physically based maquettes because it is, better than clay, more intuitive to use, and far more productive."
- Geoff Cambell, ILM Senior Model Supervisor

TIBERIUS VIRIS

INFERNO

THE GATE TO HELL



Matte painting is a digital art style which combines a variety of techniques to create scenes that are hard to find in the real world. This style was originally created for the movies, but it's now used widely for any kind of application that requires unreal environments.



a walkthrough to *Inferno*

TIBERIUS VIRIS **INFERNO** THE GATE TO HELL



Introduction

Matte painting is a digital art style which combines digital painting, photo manipulation and 3D in order to create scenes that are otherwise hard, if not impossible, to find in the real world. This style was developed initially for the movies, but it's now used widely for any kind of application that requires fantasy or sci-fi environments. Of course, movies are still the ones who use it the most. There is no single famous movie made after 2003 that didn't hire a famous matte painter to make its backgrounds; 'Lord of the Rings', 'Matrix', 'Star Wars', 'King Kong', etc.

Basically, in modern movies, the actors are performing on a small area called "active set" or "platform". This can be a studio room, like the weather forecasts which are filmed against a blue background, with all the nice graphics behind them which are added by computer, an outside platform or even a real environment. It's then the job of the matte painter to change

everything around them to make it blend with the active set. For instance, in 'Lord of the Rings', Frodo was filmed on a boring mountain cliff that you can see anywhere, then the hired matte painter changed everything around him; added a volcano, a nifty background and sky, and made it look like he was on the way to 'Mordor'.

Movies set aside, matte painting as a digital art form means to connect several environments that are otherwise boring and useless as individual images, into one complex and interesting scene without losing the sense of realism - making an egg out of broken shell, if you like. Usually, photos are used for texture and reality reference, and everything else gets painted. How much is painted however depends on the specific requirements of the client. For example, 'Inferno' was 75% painted because the one person who hired me wanted a more game/cartoon-like feeling. It's less a matte painting and more of a digital painting.

Tools (fig.01)

From the beginning, it's worth mentioning that I use a 'Wacom Graphire 4' tablet for my matte paintings. However, if you have a steady hand and strong photo manipulation skills you can also do it with a mouse, it will just take longer when compared to using a tablet. When Matte Painting, the most used tools are; Brush, Clone Stamp, Eraser, Smudge and Dodge/Burn. 'Brush' and 'Eraser' are self explanatory. 'Clone Stamp' is used mostly for creating new areas using texture from the original photo. 'Smudge' can be used for many purposes such as smoothing, creating special FX or mixing colours.

'Dodge' and 'Burn' come in handy when you have to remake the highlights and shadows or when creating specific materials such as metal, silk or water.



(fig.01)

Preparing for a New Image

Before starting anything, the most important part is the **research**. Assuming you already had your moment of inspiration and have a scene in mind, you should start by laying your ideas on paper, but I'm not referring to just a sketch! You should make a list of scene elements, analyze them, decide upon your focal element. See what you can do and what's harder for you to make, search for references, make individual try-outs of those individual elements and consider replacing them if you feel like they are too much of a challenge for you. Look at photos, study the material you plan to use, make colour sketches to see how the elements and tones work together. I'm not saying that this is the *right* way to do it, but this is how I do it and it spares me of a lot of frustration. It's true that accidents can bring nice effects, but unless you get lucky you will get a lot of stress if you figure, right in the middle of your project, that you have to re-do everything because the scene elements simply don't work together.

More Advice:

Work on big sizes even if you don't plan to make the image also available as a print. This will allow you to easily fix small details. If the image looks good on 100% then it will look good on 25% too. Force yourself to work at full resolution and use smaller views only for guiding. If something doesn't come out as you planned, don't panic! (Hitchhiker's Guide anyone?) Take a deep breath, drink some water, walk around your room and try again. The fact is, the more frustrated you get the lesser the chances are to create something good. Even if you're working against a deadline, don't push your physical limits. Take frequent breaks and do something else during that time.

Step 1 (fig.02,03)

Right, so here we are, where everything begins with a 'silly' sketch. As you can see, in the image on the right, I've quickly spread some tones in order to see how they blend



together. Everything is painted - nothing fancy. In fact, everything is a mess at this point, but that is how it's supposed to be. The bridge is a remainder of my initial idea, but it's going to be dropped at a later stage. It was supposed to become some creepy infernal castle connected with mainland. The key point here is to experiment with colours. Don't bother with details. Worry about perspective and tones instead. Colours were blocked in using a big hard-edged brush. Smaller stripes on the cliff edge were painted using a mixture of chalky and hard-edged brushes. The sky was spread with a customized round chalky brush.

Step 2 (fig.04)

Basically, what happened so far was focusing on the main element of the scene (the volcano) and I started to build it up together with the surrounding area. I always like to work on areas rather than spread my attention all around the scene. I'm not saying this is how you should do it, it's only how I do it. I would normally start with the sky, since the entire scene depends on it, but for now what I have is enough. Apart from the rock texture, everything is painted up to this point. It was painful to figure out a good way to paint cliffs, but after many try-outs, I finally



managed to come up with something decent. The key is to close your eyes and think how a cliff-side would like. Then paint line by line, element by element. Don't throw yourself over the whole cliff at once! Experiment and you will come up with much better results than I did! I should've started with the sky, since the whole atmosphere and light depends upon it, but lucky for me I already had the whole scene in mind. However, don't do this at home - always start with the sky!

Step 3 (fig.05)

I went ahead building more of the volcano, since it's the dominant element in the scene. Again, this step is completely painted. Painting smoke and clouds can become frustrating but luckily, I like to do it (I should write a tutorial soon about painting clouds!). There are tonnes of ways to do this, but I've discovered a quickmethod. Also, I thought to add some 'volcano bombs' as details for more realism. You usually paint smoke with a combination of hard-edged and chalky brushes.

Step 4 (fig.06)

Finishing the basic look of the volcano and the surrounding plateau. Please note that this step took a lot of time since the volcano is entirely painted. There's about 3-4 hours difference (with breaks) between this and the previous step. After I was happy with it, I went on replacing the bridge with a more appropriate one, and added a depth element on the plateau. I finally used photos for the texture in this step. Phew. Anymore painting and I was risking turning this into a digital painting rather, than a matte.

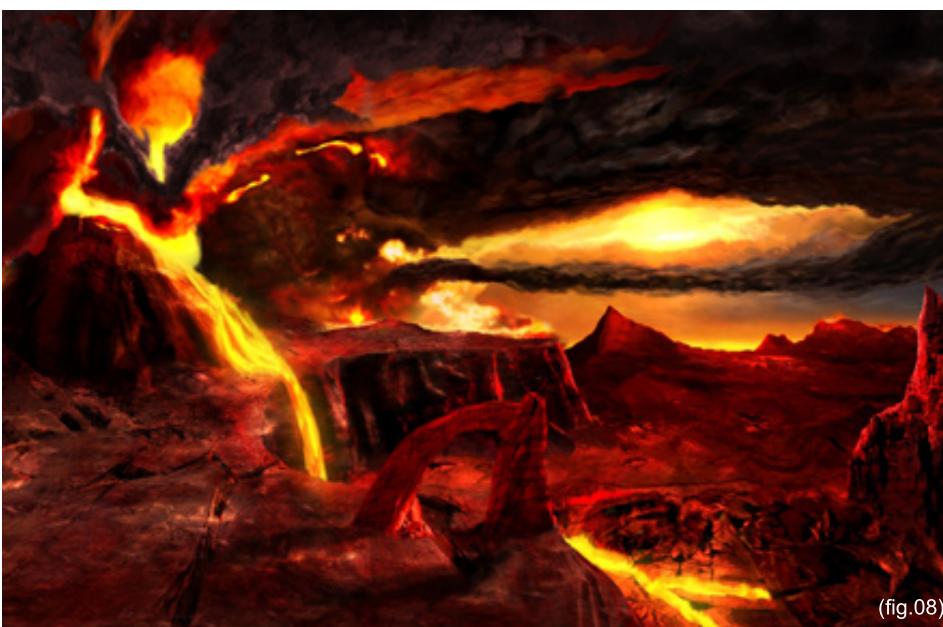
Step 5 (fig.07)

I opened up a separate file to create the sky, since the source file is starting to become big. This took another 3-4 hours. (I'll have to write a separate tutorial for clouds/smoke soon. There isn't enough space to include a full one here.) After this, I brought it to my scene and adjusted the volcano to fit it. Then I refined some details





and built up the base of the lower vale. In the end I texturised the vale. The vale was painted, then texture was added via photos. I like to paint the base myself and not just use a stock as reference. This gives me more control and artistic freedom. Generally speaking, I use photos as little as possible, as painting over them won't teach you anything! I've now dropped the bridge as it was blocking the nice horizon.



Step 6 (fig.08)

More details and refinement, especially on the vale textures. I built up the vale and painted the foreground "rock" (right). After that, I did more texturing, colour adjustments and finally I built the end of the magma flow.





(fig.11)

Step 7 (fig.09,10,11)

The final step is always the best one! ...

Details. I wanted to add so many more details; ruins, impaled skeletons, etc., but the client said the scene is already busy and that is how he likes it, so maybe another time. Dragons were so much fun to paint. I actually want to paint a full detailed one sometime soon. There is no point in painting paws or scales since no-one will see them, not even in print. However, the dragon is not just a shape who looks good only in 25% view (as many painters like to do in order to gain time). It's a pretty decent background dragon, even in full view.

And that's it! I hope you found this small and humble guide useful to some degree.

Inferno - Tiberius Viris

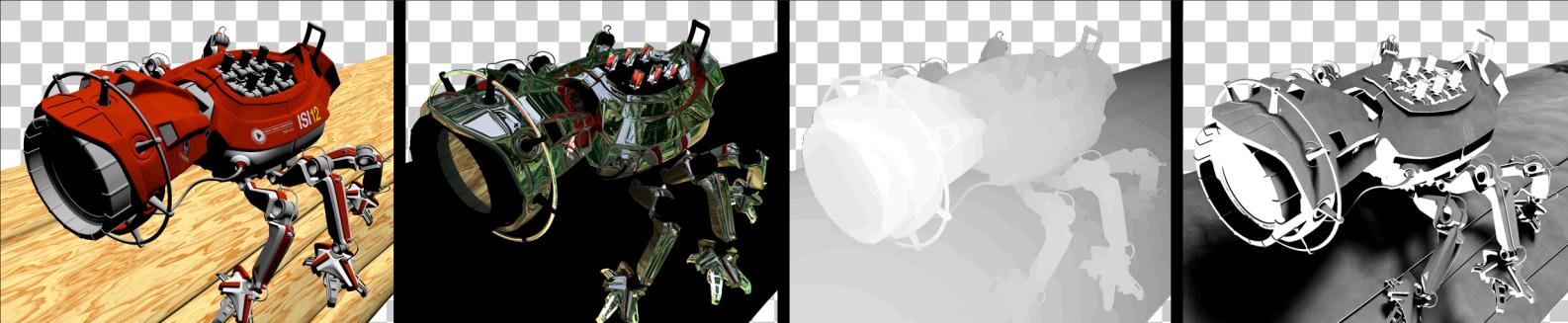
More Details can be found at:

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You can contact them at:

suirebit@gmail.com





COLOR

REFLECTIONS

DEPTH

SHADOWS



THE POWER OF LAYERS



STRATA 3D CX 5.0

DESIGN AT A HIGHER POWER

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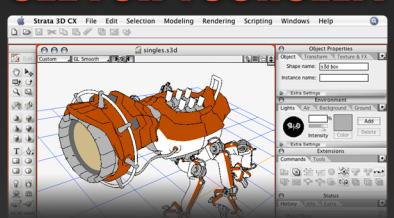
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THE

GALLERY

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Waheed Nasir '06



Ancient Tree

Kuang Hong

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Gladiator

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Sunflowers

Waheed Nasir

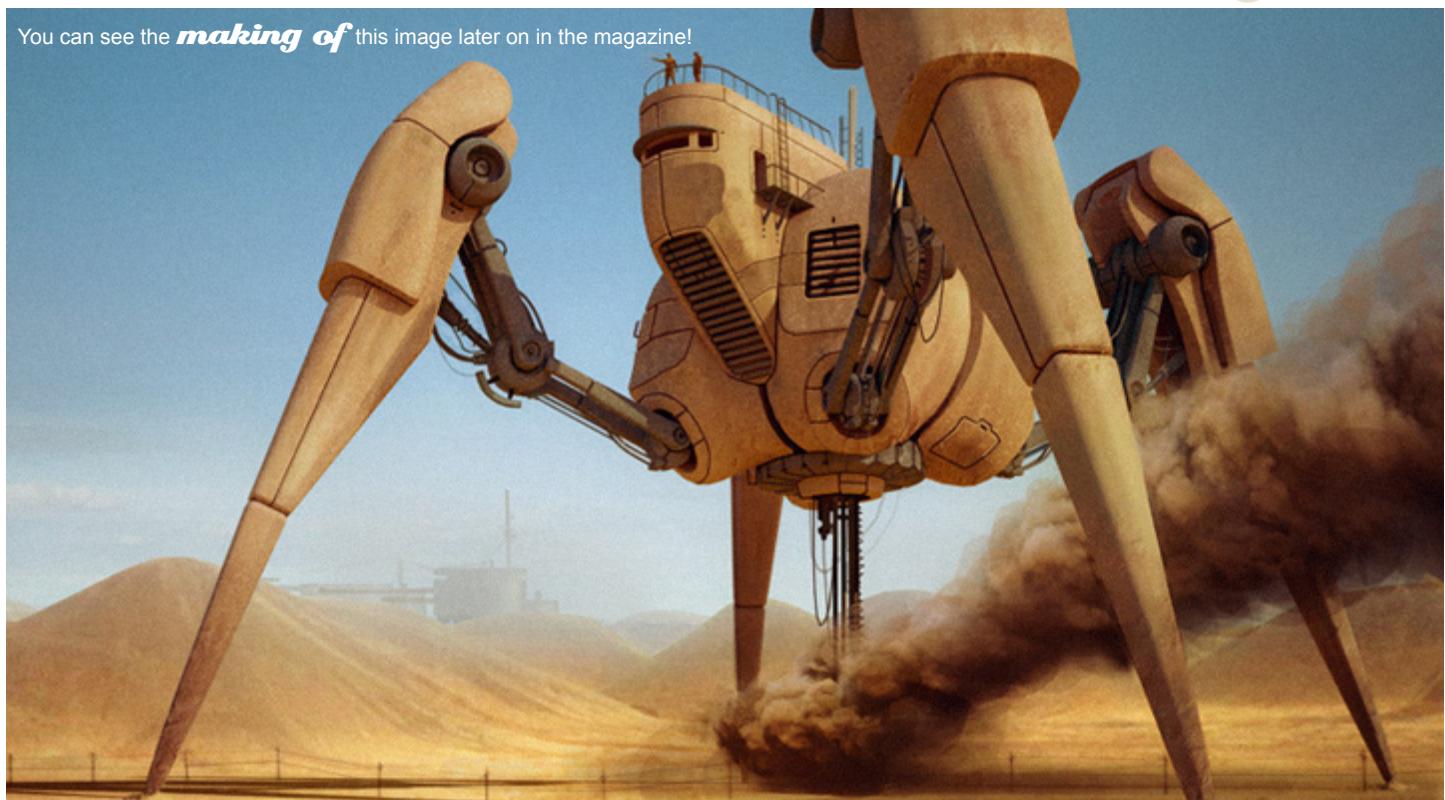
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You can see the ***making of*** this image later on in the magazine!



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Dancer***

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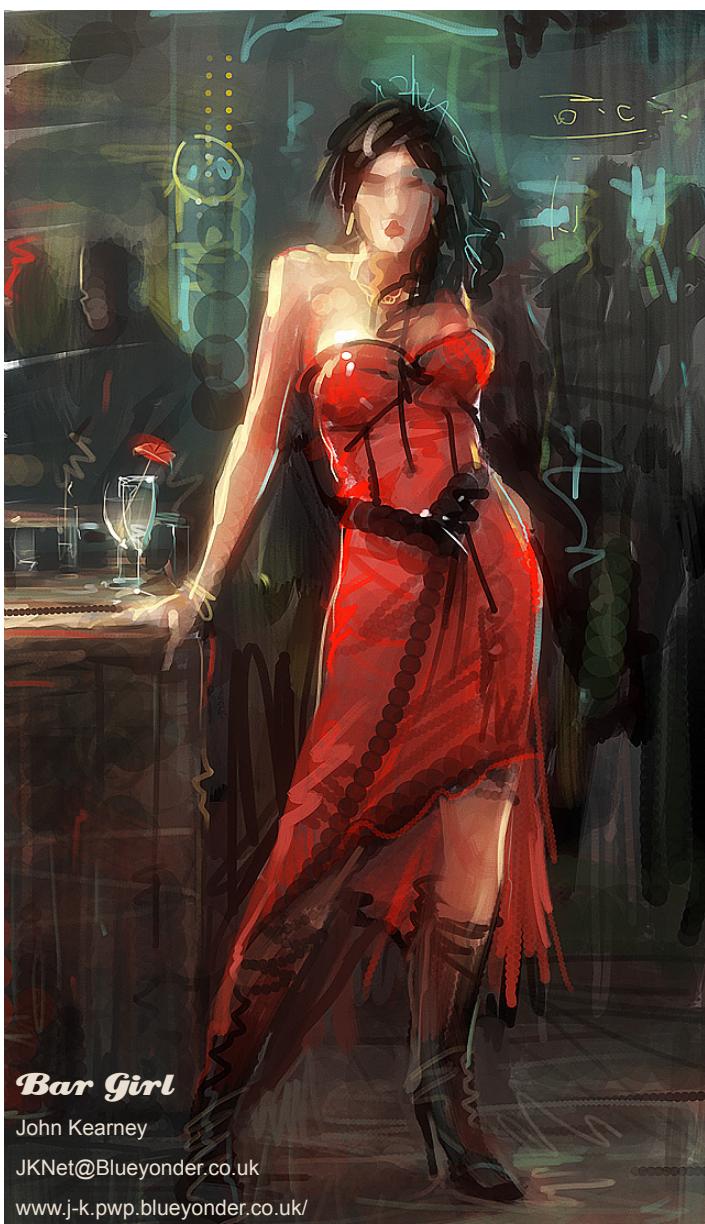


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by Richard Tilbury

ELEMENTS

DIGITAL PAINTING TUTORIAL SERIES

The 'elements' series is a guide to basic 2D Digital painting and can be followed in most software packages supporting paintbrushes and layers.

Each month, 2 or 3 professional artists will cover a specific theme or 'element', resulting in 2 or 3 different styles and techniques which can be viewed side by side. This month we will be doing skin.

SUBJECTS:

Issue 06 : June 06 : part 6 : FIRE & SMOKE

Issue 07 : July 06 : part 7 : FUR & HAIR

Issue 08 : August 06 : part 8 : EYES

Issue 04 : September 09 : part 9 : SKIN

Issue 10 : November 06 : part 10 : FLESH WOUNDS



This month's tutorial will deal with the topic of painting skin. As with any subject, it is important to gather as many references as possible before starting. Skin is yet another element that varies greatly, hence the importance of research. No one person looks the same and so it is important to decide on a rough colour scheme early on. I decided as a starting point, to begin with a rough drawing I had already done on paper in one of my sketchbooks.

1. The first stage, as always, was to make a quick copy of the drawing on a new layer using a small standard airbrush set to about 8 pixels wide and set to Multiply. This will act as our guide for the painting, which you can see in Fig.1.



Fig02

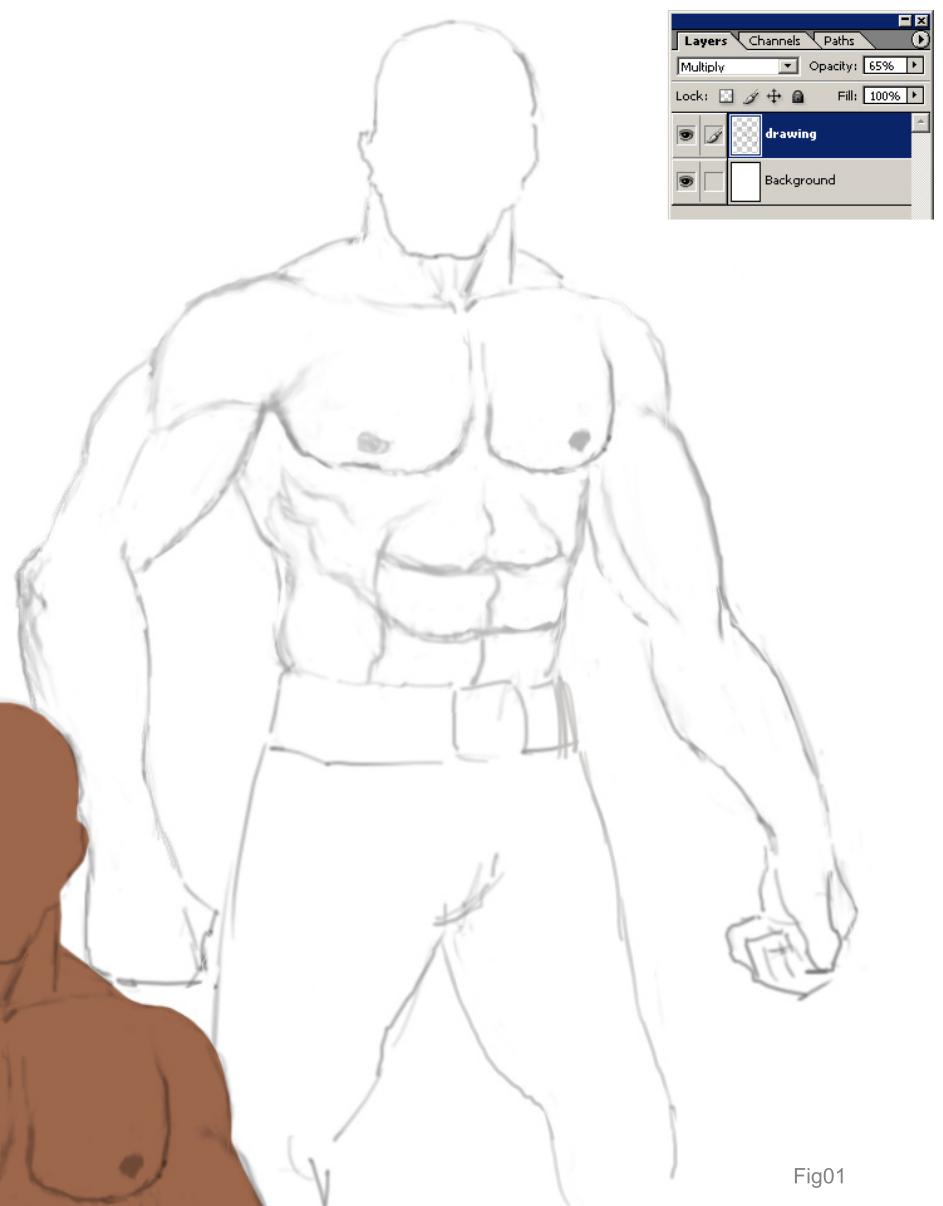
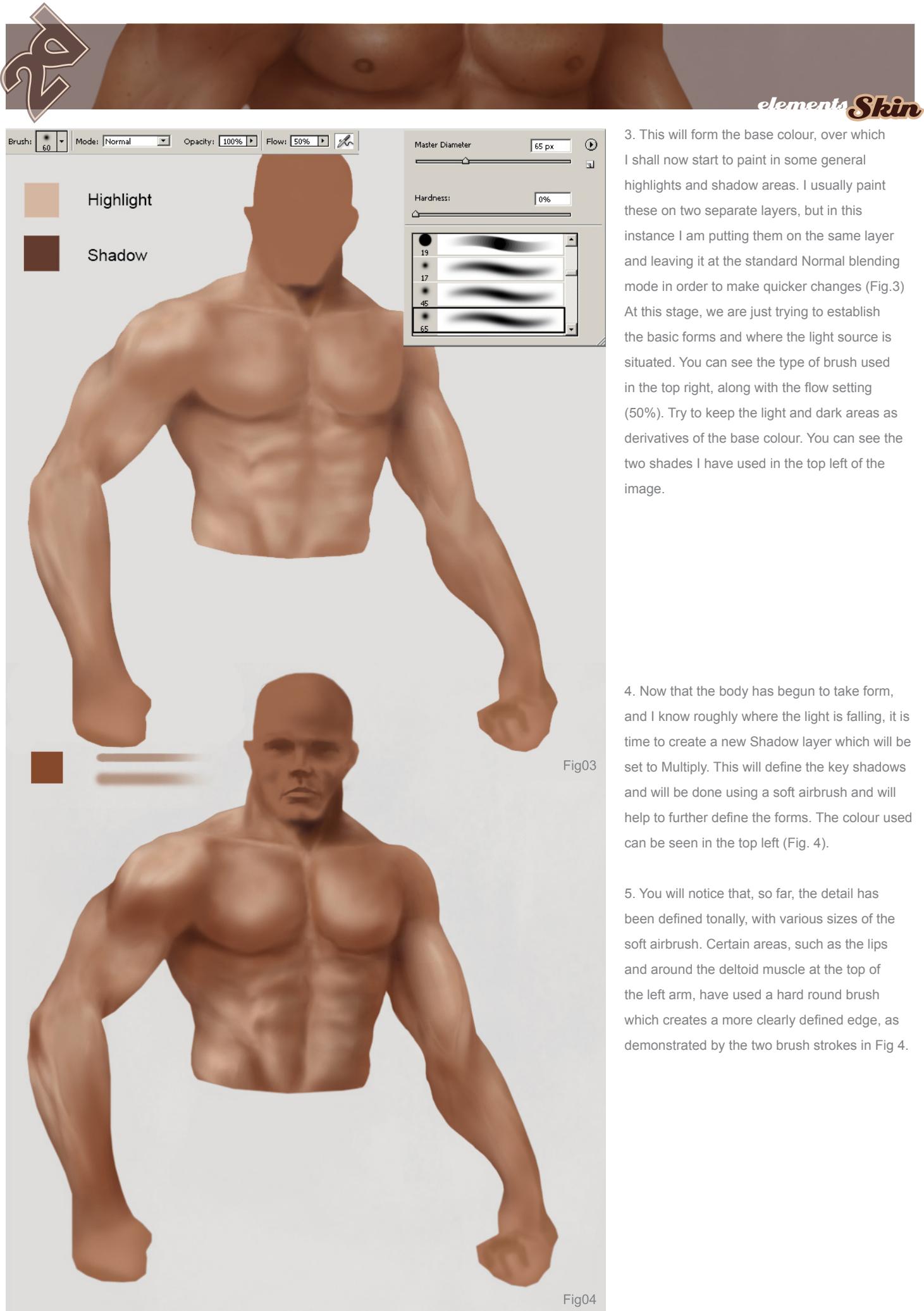


Fig01

2. Quite often I place the predominant colour down across the entire canvas, which in this case is a light brown (R157, G103, B76), but here I wanted to keep a white backdrop, so I made a mask around the drawing and then filled in the body only (Fig.2)



6. Now that a shadow layer has been established, it is time to create one for the highlights, which will be set to Soft light as a blending mode. In Fig. 5, you can see the colour used in the top left. I have also gone back to the original lighting layer and also added in some highlights across the face and neck to improve the head area.

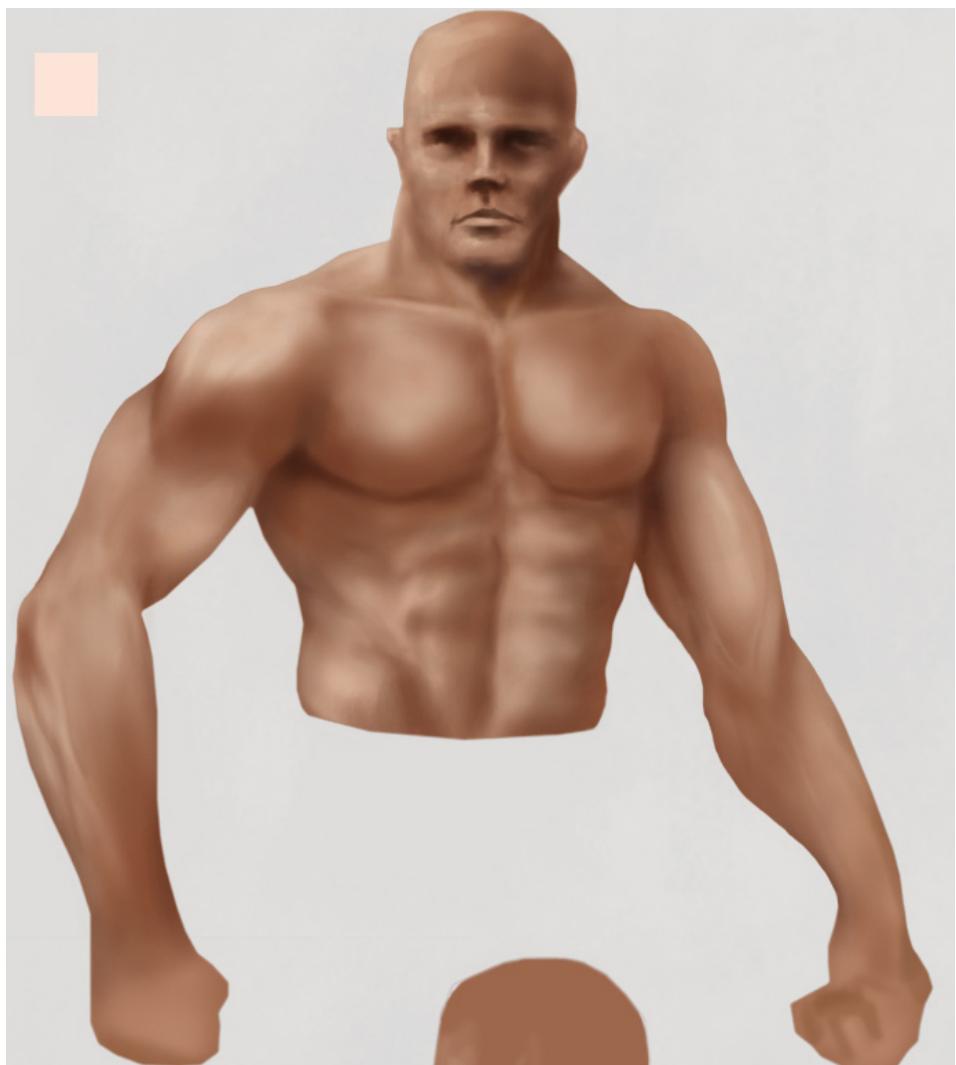


Fig05

7. There are essentially two further layers that I will use before flattening the image and making colour adjustments. One shall be reserved for detail only, namely the nipples and veins, and the other will be called 'refinements' which shall be another highlights layer in essence. In Fig. 6, you can see this layer isolated over the base layer. It is set to Normal blending mode and uses the same colour as the highlights layer. The purpose of the layer is to enhance what is already there by using finer strokes, as well as paint in the brightest areas. Keeping this as a separate layer just means more control when making final adjustments to the tonal ranges.



Fig06

8. With this layer complete, and the small details painted in, it is just a question of making some minor colour changes, which in this case means a colour balance adjustment layer which I tweaked towards a more yellow hue. One last layer, which is set to Soft Light, is used to add some colour to the ears and lips, as well as some of the random areas, to add a little colour variation.

9. One could now add some blemishes and marks, along with some subtle colour variation, to help reduce the consistency of the skin tones.



Richard Tilbury

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Fig07



by Emrah Elmasli

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In this tutorial, I'll try to explain the painting process of a realistic human skin texture. I'll use the upper torso of a male body as my subject, which is a very good surface to apply light, form and detail. It's always good to use a reference in subjects like this - a photograph or a live model will do. I begin my painting process by creating a new A4 document in Photoshop CS2. The first step is drawing the lines of the torso. I start by drawing the main sketch on a new layer with a simple brush (figure 01), by looking at a torso reference found in an anatomy book.

To begin, it's always useful to draw a basic sketch which indicates the main forms of the subject. By doing this, our painting will be better and correct (figure 02).

After finishing my sketch and being happy with it, I change the "layer properties" to "multiply" and open up a new layer underneath it. I fill this



Fig02

new layer with a medium skin tone (R: 219; G: 190; B: 156), which I'm thinking of using in my painting, using the "fill" tool (figure 03).

As we know, skin tones vary by the races and



Fig03

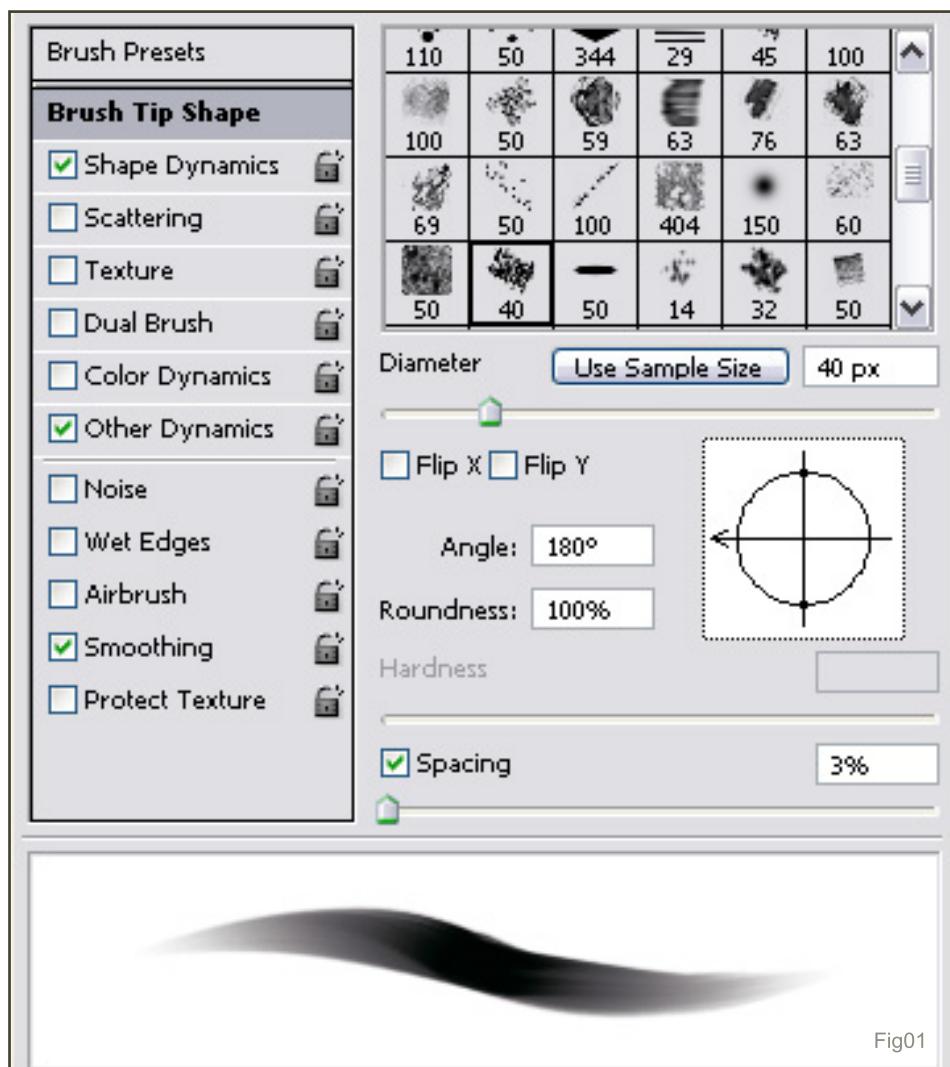


Fig01

countries we live in. The skin that I'm going to paint belongs to a white man, with a medium-toned skin. I continue by opening a new layer between the sketch and the medium skin tone layer. I start to determine general forms with the soft brush that you will see detailed in figure 04. The colours that I use while painting the forms are the darker and warmer tones of the medium skin tone that I used before. I pay more attention to the general "stain" values, then going more into the details and trying to figure out the form of the skin, the curves of the muscles and the colour of the final skin tone. (figure 05)

For the next step I can start to apply the highlights by considering the angle of the light source. I use the yellowish and lighter tones of the skin, so that the form starts to slowly become more defined (figure 06).

After being happy with the highlights and the shadows of the form, I start to paint over the lines and try to make the painting look more



Brush Presets

Brush Tip Shape

- Shape Dynamics
- Scattering
- Texture
- Dual Brush
- Color Dynamics
- Other Dynamics
- Noise
- Wet Edges
- Airbrush
- Smoothing
- Protect Texture

110 50 344 29 45 100
100 50 59 63 76 63
69 50 100 404 150 60
50 40 50 14 32 50

Diameter: 150 px

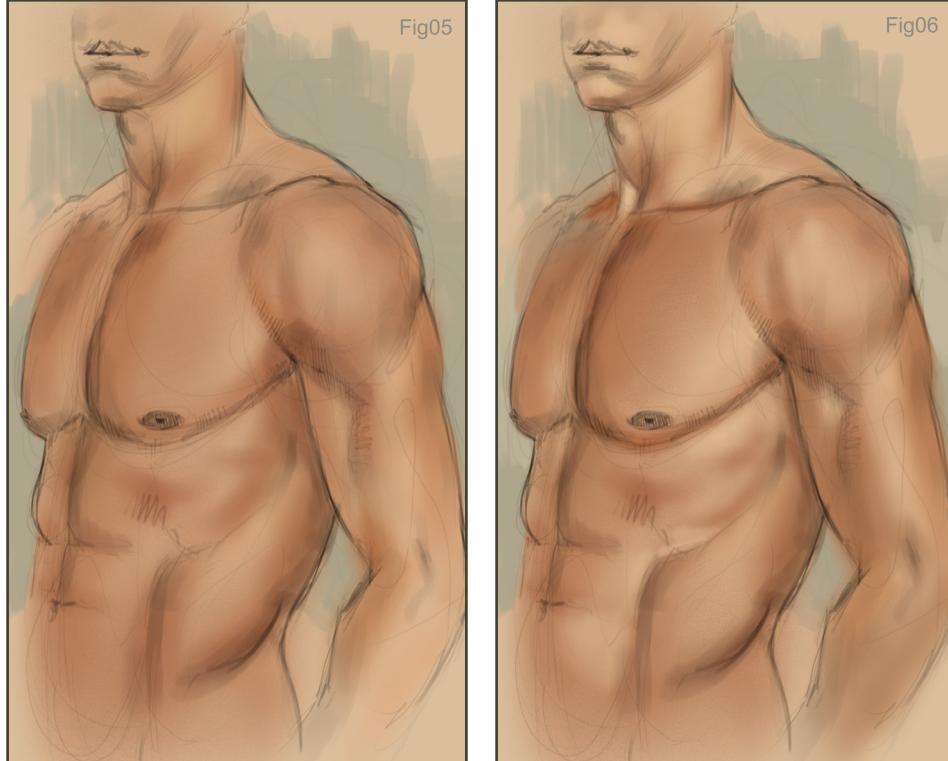
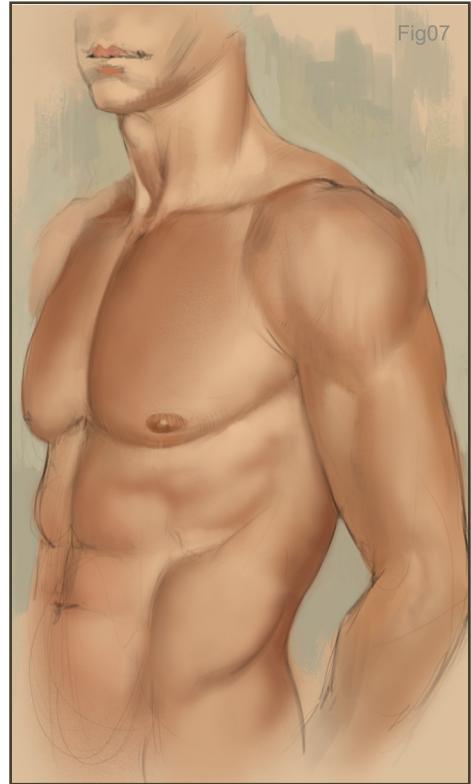
Flip X Flip Y
Angle: 0° Roundness: 100% Hardness: 0%
Spacing: 10%

Fig04

realistic (figure 07). The brushes I use while painting over the lines are the airbrushes that I use frequently, and the hard-edged brushes which I use to paint the sharp edges (figure 08).

NOTE: Skin takes the form of the muscles and wraps it like a cloth.

One of the most important things that we should



pay attention to, whilst painting a realistic skin texture, is successfully applying the curves of the muscles. If we take a look at the shoulder muscles, we can see the harmony between the skin and the muscles under it (figure 09). Human skin is a reflective surface, in despite of its matte appearance. If we look at the area between the bicep muscle on the upper arm and the ribs (figure 10), we can see the bouncing light effecting the bicep area. We call this "radiosity". This reflection changes depending on the colour and the density of the light. It is important to get the reflections right, whilst painting a realistic skin texture.

After painting over the lines (figure 11), I can start the detailing process. The best way is to examine our own skin to see what kind and amount of detail it has. Skin has details

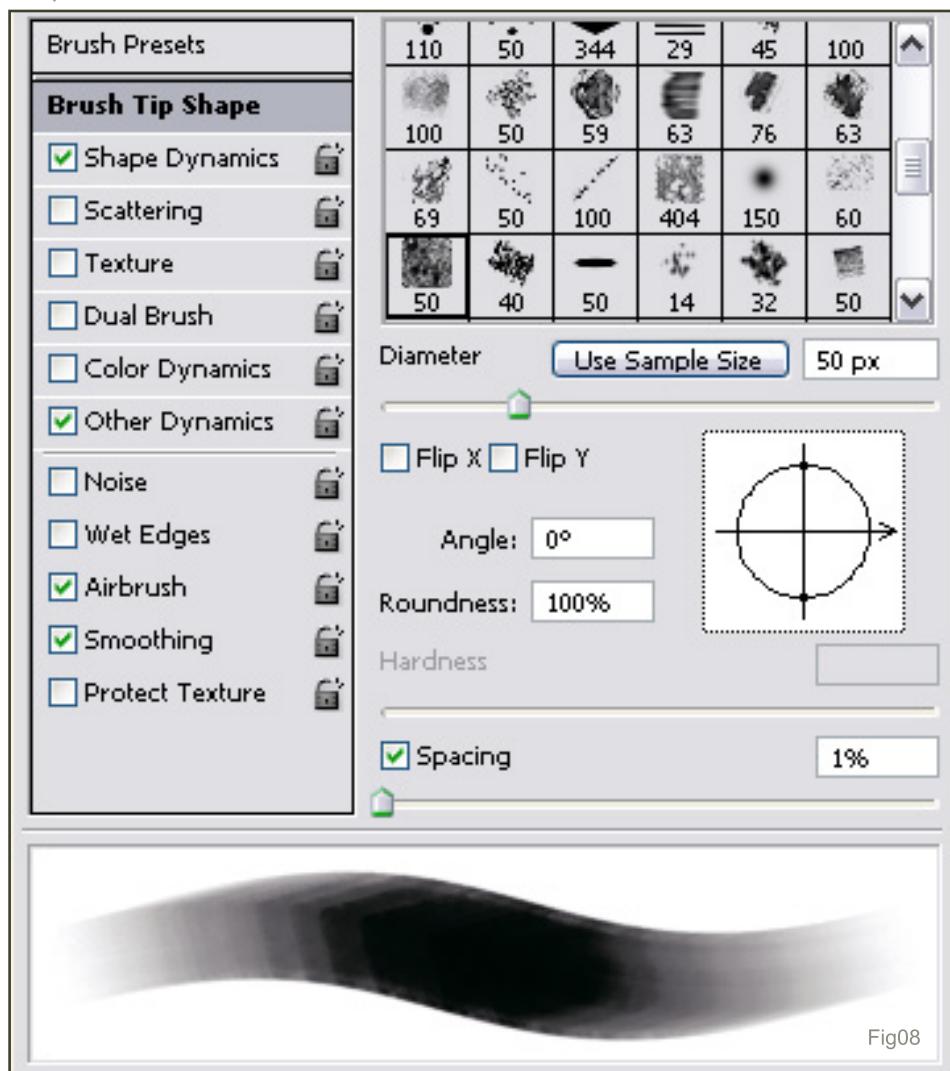


Fig08

like freckles, hair and spots. Now, I'll try to apply these details to my painting. I can start with the freckles and spots detail. One of the best ways to produce freckle details, is to create them traditionally by using a brush and watercolours. All you need to do is to spatter some watercolour paint on to white paper. After

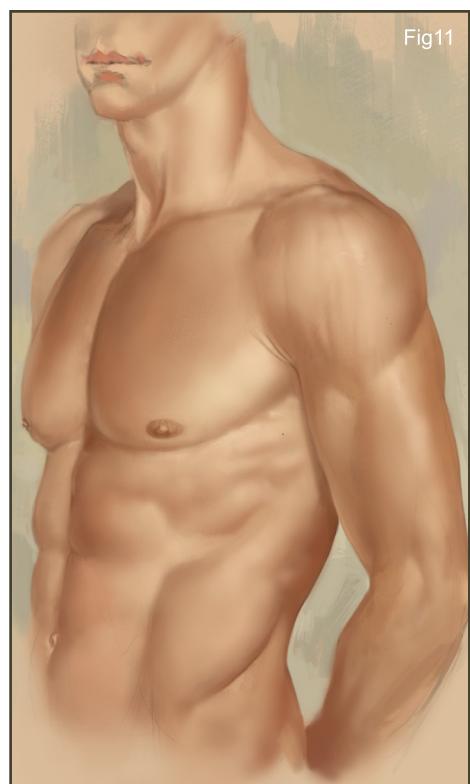


Fig11

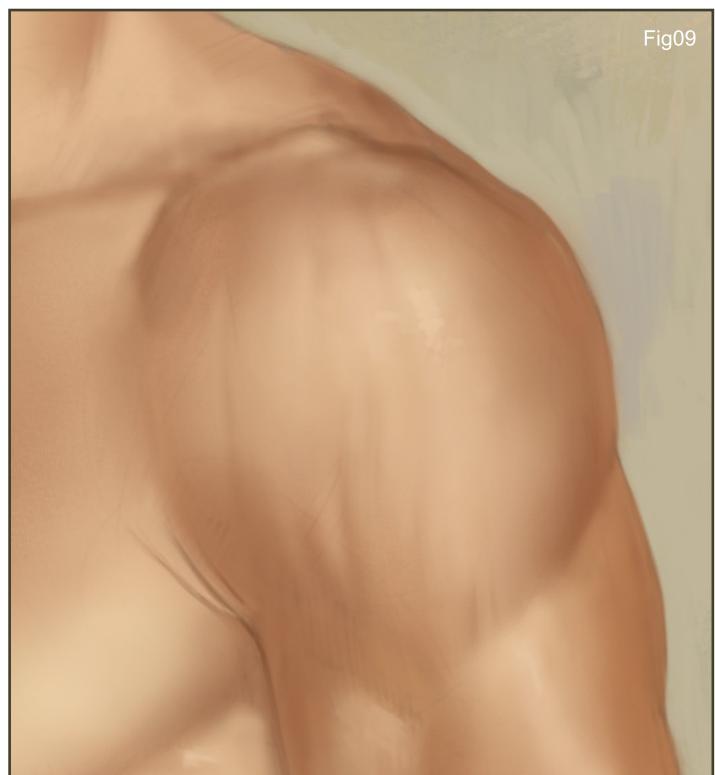


Fig09

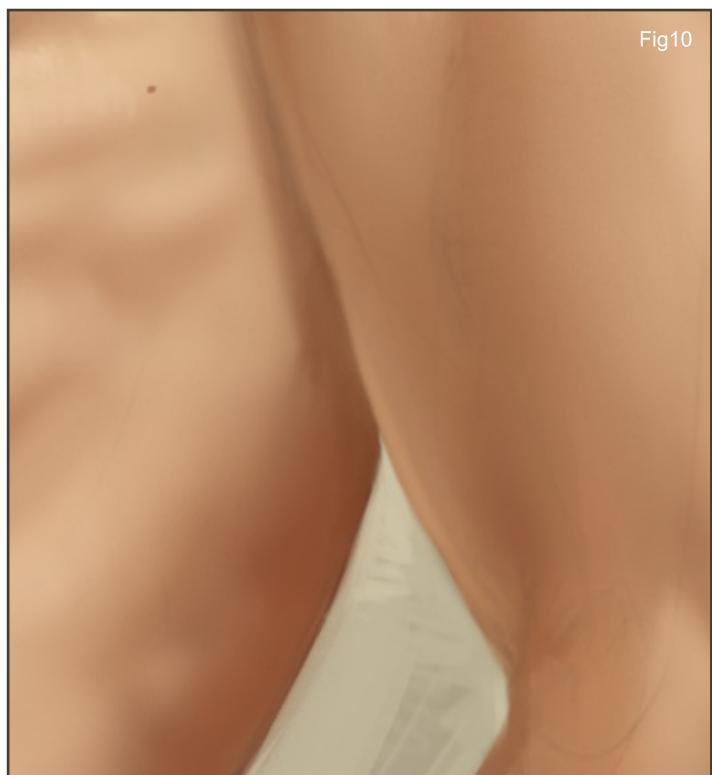


Fig10

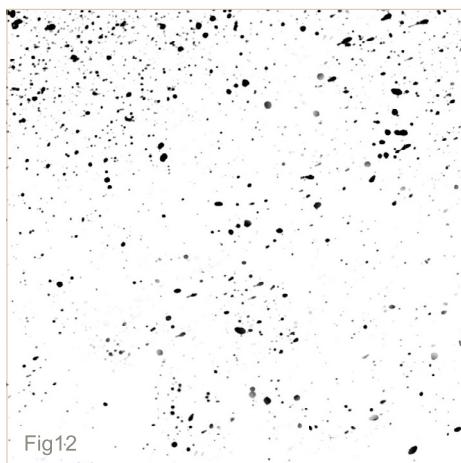


Fig12



Fig13

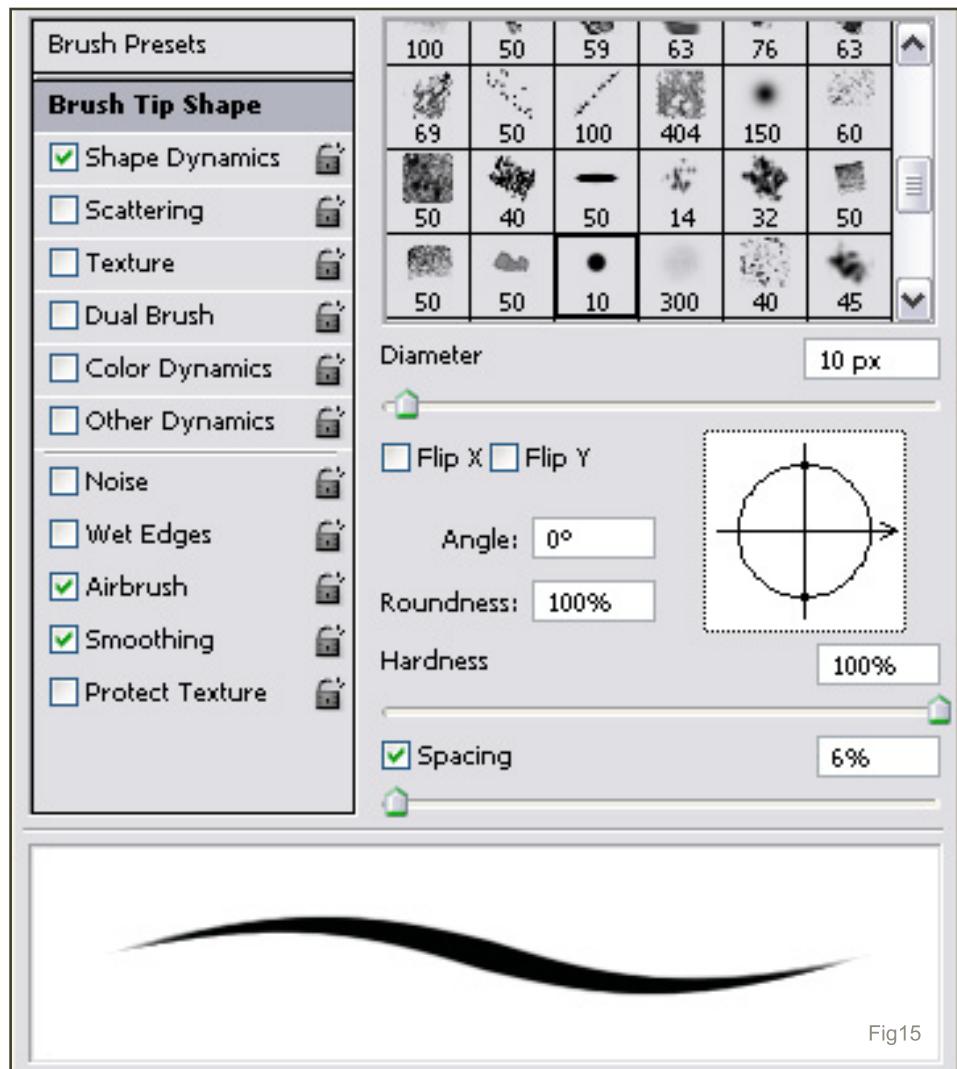


Fig15

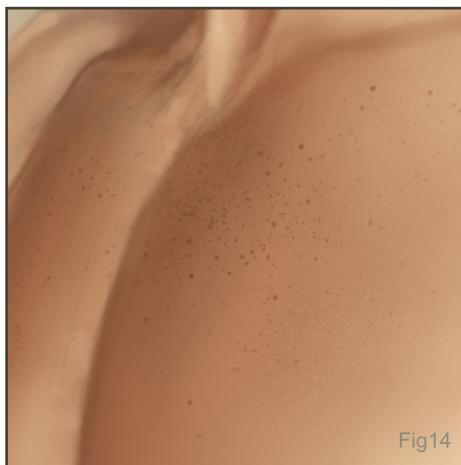


Fig14

creating the spatter effect, you scan it and make it ready to use digitally. Using Photoshop, I desaturate the spatter texture and adjust the levels until it becomes pure black and white (figure 12). Then I copy this texture on my painting and apply it to the suitable places. To integrate the freckles with the skin I change the "layer properties" of the layer to "colour burn", and to make it less dominant I decrease its opacity to 50% (figure 13). To make it look more homogeneous, I erase some of the spots. I also apply some brown coloured spots to make the skin texture richer (figure 14). The other way of

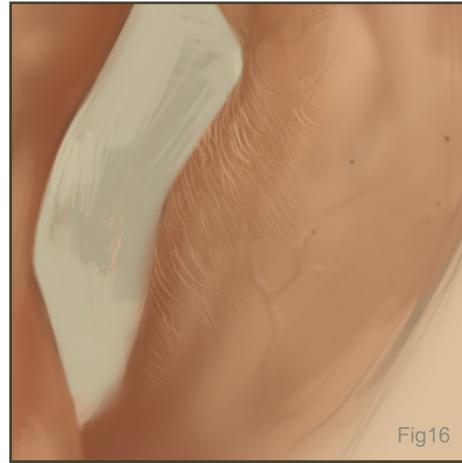


Fig16

make the texture look more detailed is to add some hair to it. I paint these hairs on the lower arm with a thin, hard brush one by one (figure 15). The colour of the hair I chose is a lighter tone of the skin colour (R: 199, G: 154, B: 116) (figure 16).

Another detail which reveals under the skin, is



Fig17

the veins. I add some blue-ish, grey coloured vein details on the bicep muscle with a soft and calligraphic brush, without over-doing them. To make them "pop out" more I add some highlights to them with a lighter tone of the skin colour (figure 17). After adding all these details, I've almost finished the painting. There

are just some colour and contrast adjustments left to be made. Over all my layers I open some "Adjustment Layers" like; "brightness/contrast", "colour/balance" and "hue/saturation". You can find these by going to the "layer" menu and clicking on the "New Adjustment Layer". I increase the contrast and decrease the saturation a bit. Also, I adjust the colours by the help of "Colour Balance" and make them look more accurate. As a last step I will add a "noise effect" over the skin to make it look rougher. I open a new layer and fill it with a greyish tone of the skin colour (for example: R:180; G: 170; B:150). After this, I go to the "Filter" menu, click on "Noise" and select "Add Noise" effect, then make these adjustments: Amount: 400%, Distribution: Uniform (figure 18).

After this, I use the "Spatter Effect" to make the

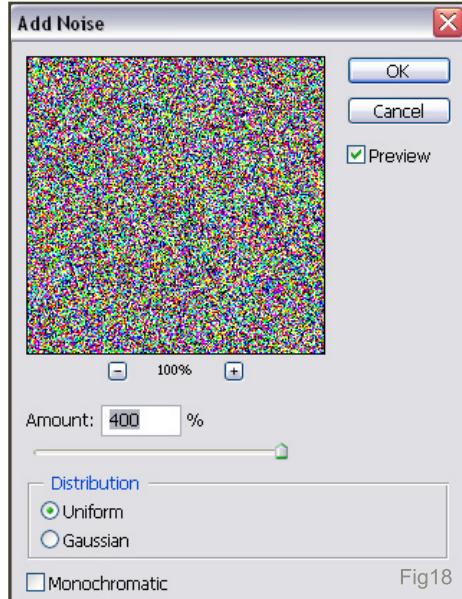
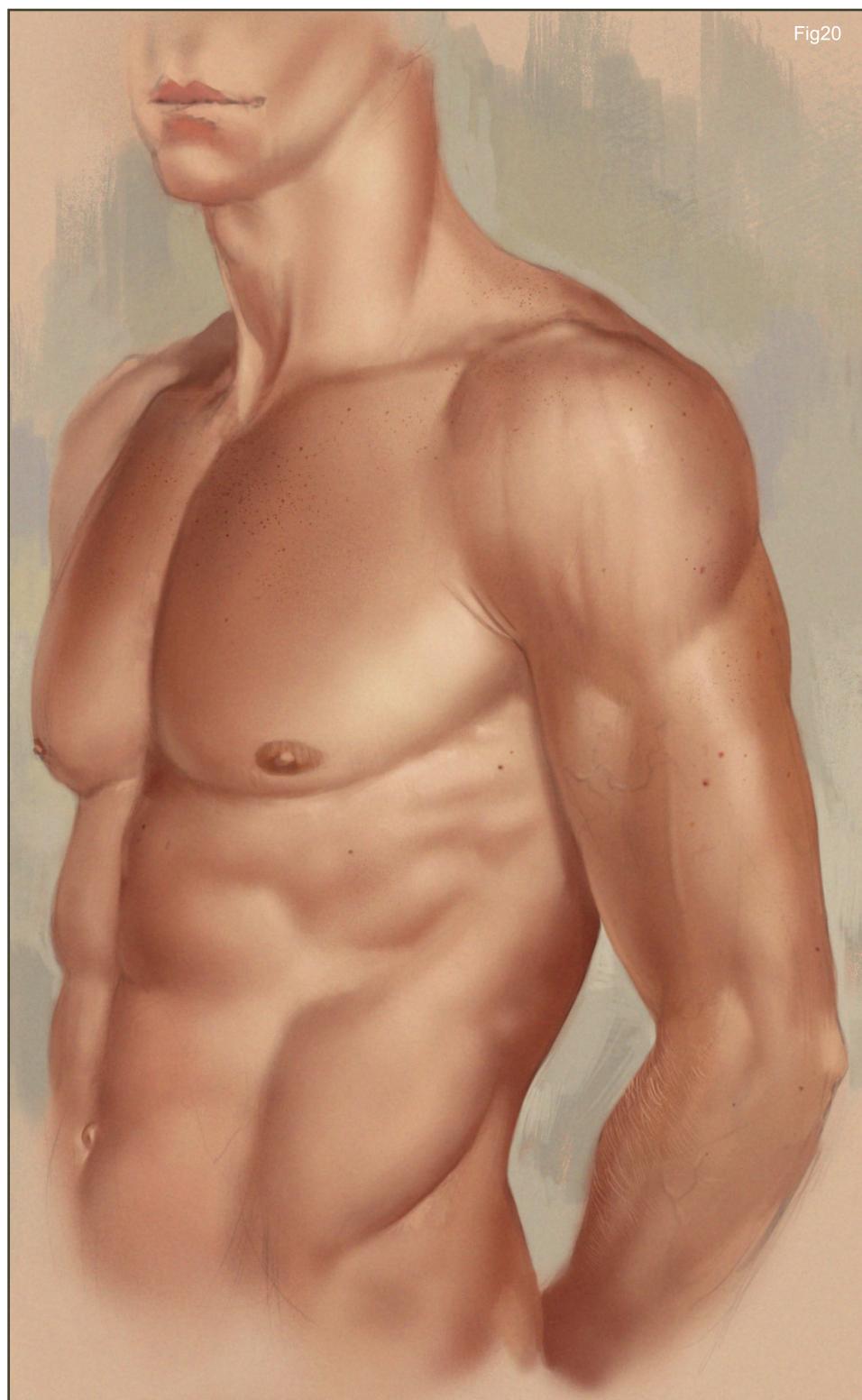

Fig18

Fig19

Fig20

"noise" look messy and unbalanced. (Filter> Brush Strokes >Spatter). Then I apply "Blur Effect" on the same layer twice. (Filter> Blur> Blur) (figure 19). Lastly, I decrease the opacity of the layer to 4%. Finally, my skin painting is complete (figure 20). This is the method I use to paint realistic skin texture. I hope you like it.

Emrah Elmasli

More work from this artist can be found at: www.partycule.com
You can contact them via: emrah@partycule.com

Painting A Female Face

by Adonihs

In this tutorial, I will take you through the stages of painting a female face. I'll teach you my method for some quick, but stylish, hair strokes, eyes, skin complexion, lips, and a quick outfit to fit the female. For this tutorial, I used Photoshop...





Painting A Female Face



Sketching in your Character

As we now know, this is how I prefer to start, as I think it is the easiest way to begin. By simply laying down a basic sketch, as you can see, I have my female figure outlined. At first, I thought I would give her a 'Cruella Deville' ('101 Dalmatians') look, but as I progressed, I took out the cigarette and gave her a more "smug" look. Basically, you can use references if you want, or you can just channel your own female look. I used a reference for mine, as I can't sketch females that well, yet. Try to keep your lines very clean, almost as if you're inking in a comic book page - thin lines, nothing too bold and you can achieve something very simply. Simple is

better - you don't want to make the figure too complex because you should remember that females are soft, not hard-shaped like males.

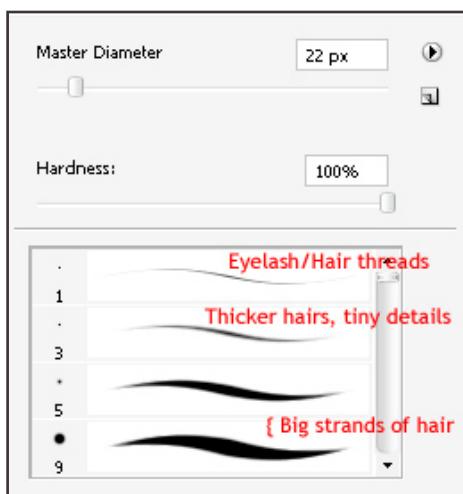
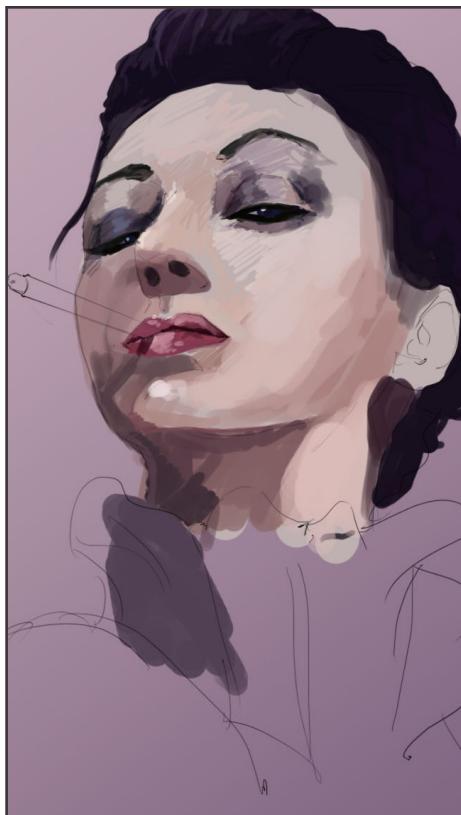
The outfit is completely up to you, if you want something stylish, ugly, futuristic, it's really down to what's in your head. For her, I wanted to create a stylish 70's look; European, fringed outfit, simple, but nice. As for her hair, all you have to worry about is just the basic shape of it - don't go and make a lot of tiny threads and strands of hair, because it will make no difference in the end.

Laying down the Background and Basic Colours

Now, for portraits, I always do the same thing for my backgrounds. I use the gradient tool, which can be found in the tool bar, and I just pick two colours and lay them flat on the background.

For her, again with the retro style, I just took two chalky pink/purple colours and used them as my background. Very simple.

Moving on to the figure's colourings, I always start off with the skin underlay colour, which is just the basic flat skin colour that I'm going to go with. Then I paint in her hair using blacks, a few purples, and so forth. I'm very obsessive about not having something coloured in - I cooled it down though by not colouring the shirt in at first. After I laid down my solid colours (black for hair, pearly-pink for skin, and so forth), I then started to paint over them with highlights and shadow differences, just trying to block in my colours, especially on the eyes which I will work on next. I decided to give her some heavy eyeliner around the eyes to give her a more mysterious look. I also laid down some brighter colours on her lips, giving what will be my starting point for the highlighting there. Also, remember to colour the shadowed area under her jaw.



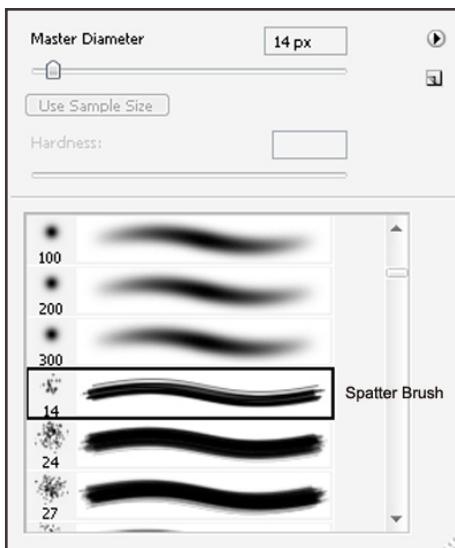
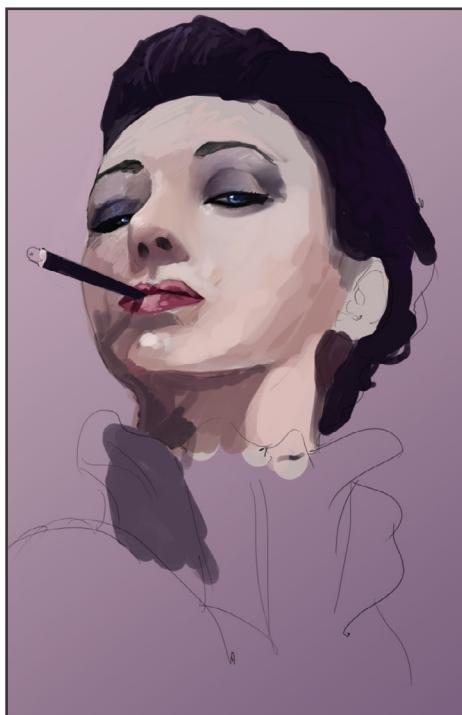
Eye Tutorial

For the eye, I will give you a small lesson on them. Since these are mostly covered by eye-shadow and mascara, you have little to work with, yet it should still "pack a punch". We firstly fill in her eye colour, like we did before.

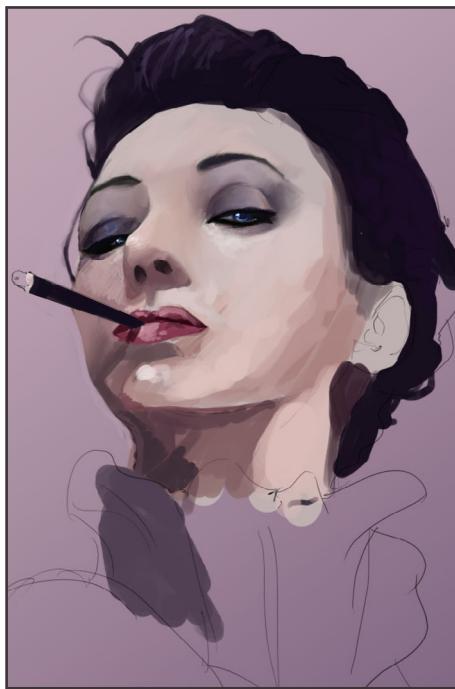


tutorial **Painting A Female Face**

Once you have your basic colouring, use a size 3 brush and start to scribble in some of the highlight colours and the pupil. For her eyes, I wanted to give her an icy cold blue look. So, taking my blue colour out of my colour picker, I then started to work in the oval shape and the highlights. You don't want to paint too much and make the whole eye a solid blue, but rather you need to blend them together. Then, you can pick out a white colour, and block in the glare on the



I always use to blend, to get the colours to mix smoothly. Once I've blended them together, I go in with either the same colour that I'm playing with, on a low opacity, or the blur tool with low strength, and just touch it up a bit. Once I'm satisfied with the look of it, I start to move on to other parts. A new technique that I've

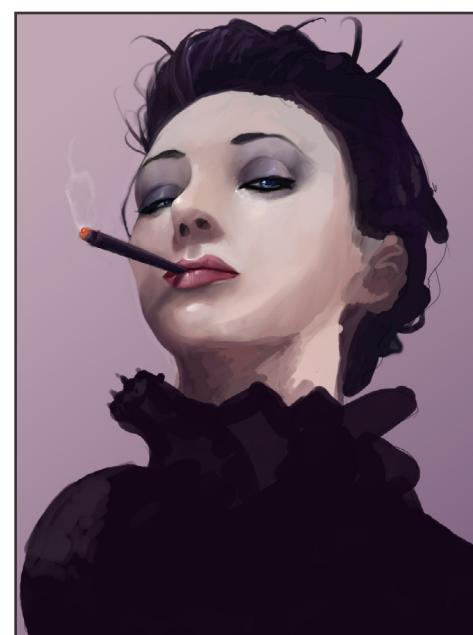
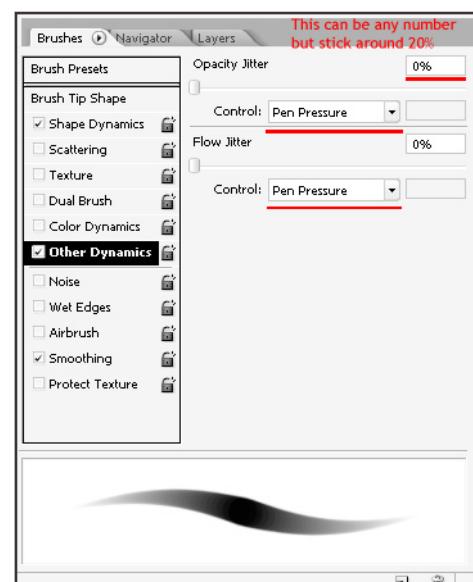


the pupil. Once you have a good shape and feel for it, use the dodge tool on a very low strength, and start to work in some highlights, mostly in the glare and the tiny bit around the pupil. Once your eyes are nearly complete, you can start to work in some eye lashes. Using a size 1 brush set on 80% opacity, draw tiny strokes from the bottom of the eye lid, and build up thicker lashes on the upper lid using a size 3 brush.

Blending and Smudging Colours

In this step, I will start to blend my colours together and make her look a lot smoother. This is my favourite part - making her more lively - when the painting feels like it's coming together. I immediately start off with her eyes, sockets, and lids. I use my typical smudge brush which

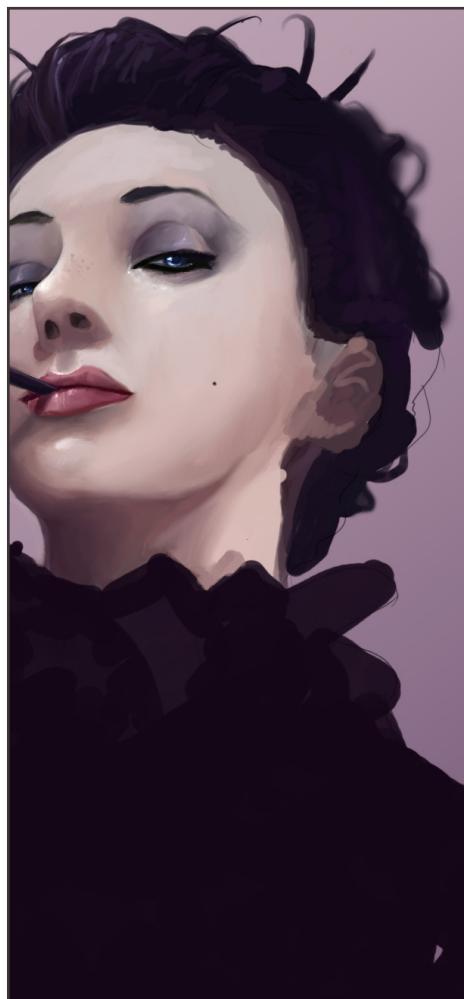
learned from artists such as Linda Bergkvist, is the simple, what I like to call, "glossy splatter" near the eye. This basically gives the shimmer of the skin, using tiny pearl colour blots. I don't have it on my skin, but it makes it look a lot more "slick" looking. I then start work on her forehead - blending and mixing as usual.





Blending and Beginning her hair

Moving on to the next step, you'll notice the strands of hair. I like to begin with a soft brush and stroke in some threads of hair. Then I go in with a hard brush, set on Pen Pressure, and go over them to get that "dream-like" flow of the hair. As for the skin, I went over it some more, just smoothing it out. Remember, **no** hard spots - make everything as smooth as can be!

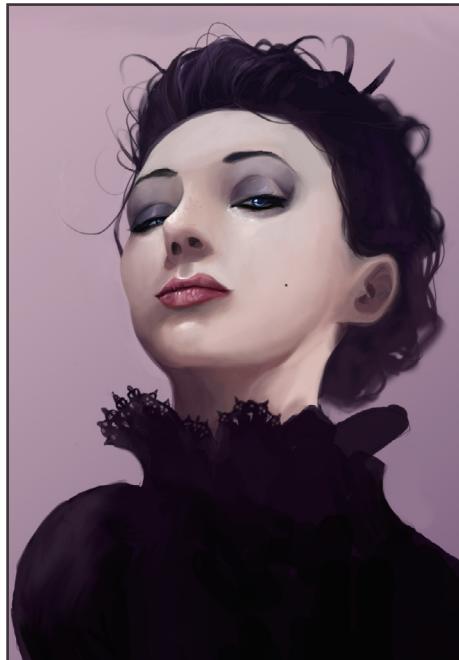
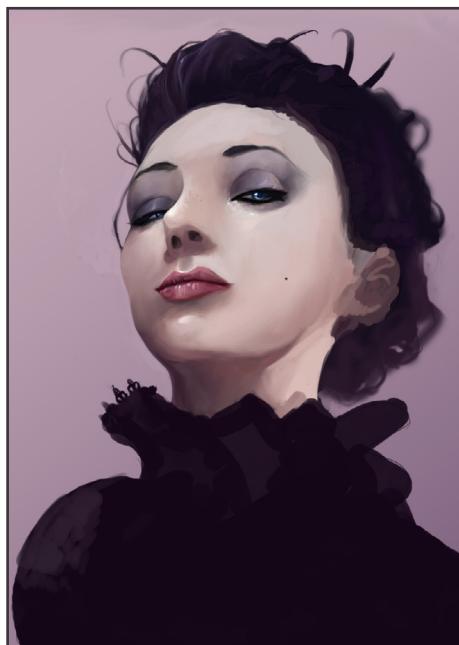


Refining and touching up

Now, although it looks like a lot has been done, not all that much has been. The main differences are in the eyes. Here, I've totally refined them - opened them up a little more - putting extra detail in the eyelashes. I've smoothed out a lot more of the colours, whilst also working on her chin area a little more - curving it. As for her ear, I began late on this so added some basic tones to it then built it up so that it's just not one solid purple colour.

Quick hair and fleshing out her cheek

For this step, I used a soft brush in both parts. For her cheek, I turned down the opacity of the colour to 20% and started to flesh it out a bit. By doing this, it helps to curve the lighting on her face to create a softer shape, rather than a hard shadow. Block in the soft colours around the areas that look a little harsh by turning the opacity down - this will make the colours more seamless. As for the back of her hair, which is starting to take place, use the soft brush again to create some curls and light strands.



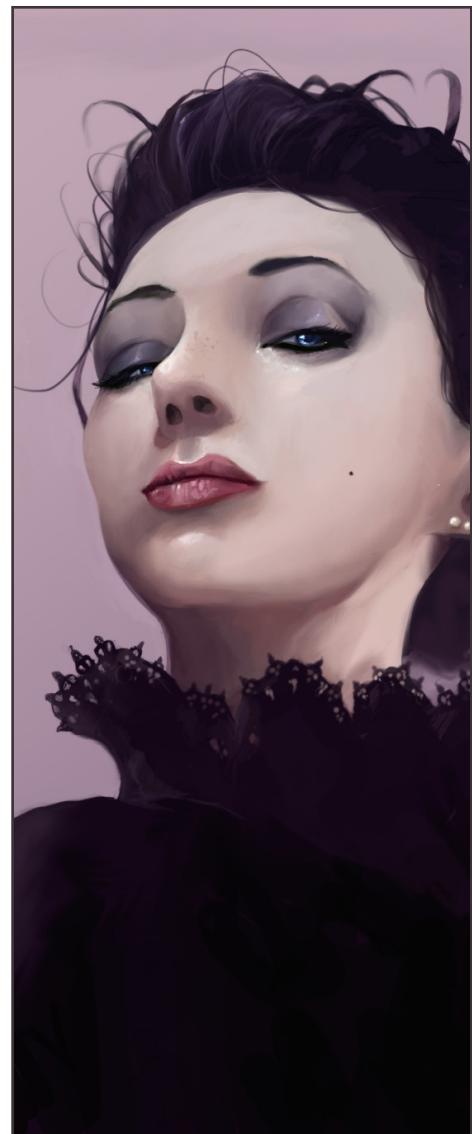
tutorial **Painting A Female Face**

Cigarette gone and refining

I've now removed the cigarette and started to refine some of the soft spots on her face. Firstly, I worked on the area where the shadow of the cigarette fell on her cheek, then over-painted the cheek with a soft pink/pearl colour, starting to blend all of the additional colours together. Once I have a consistent colour scheme for the side of her face, I can then start to blur it in using the Blur tool - not too rough - just soft enough to get a smooth touch to it.

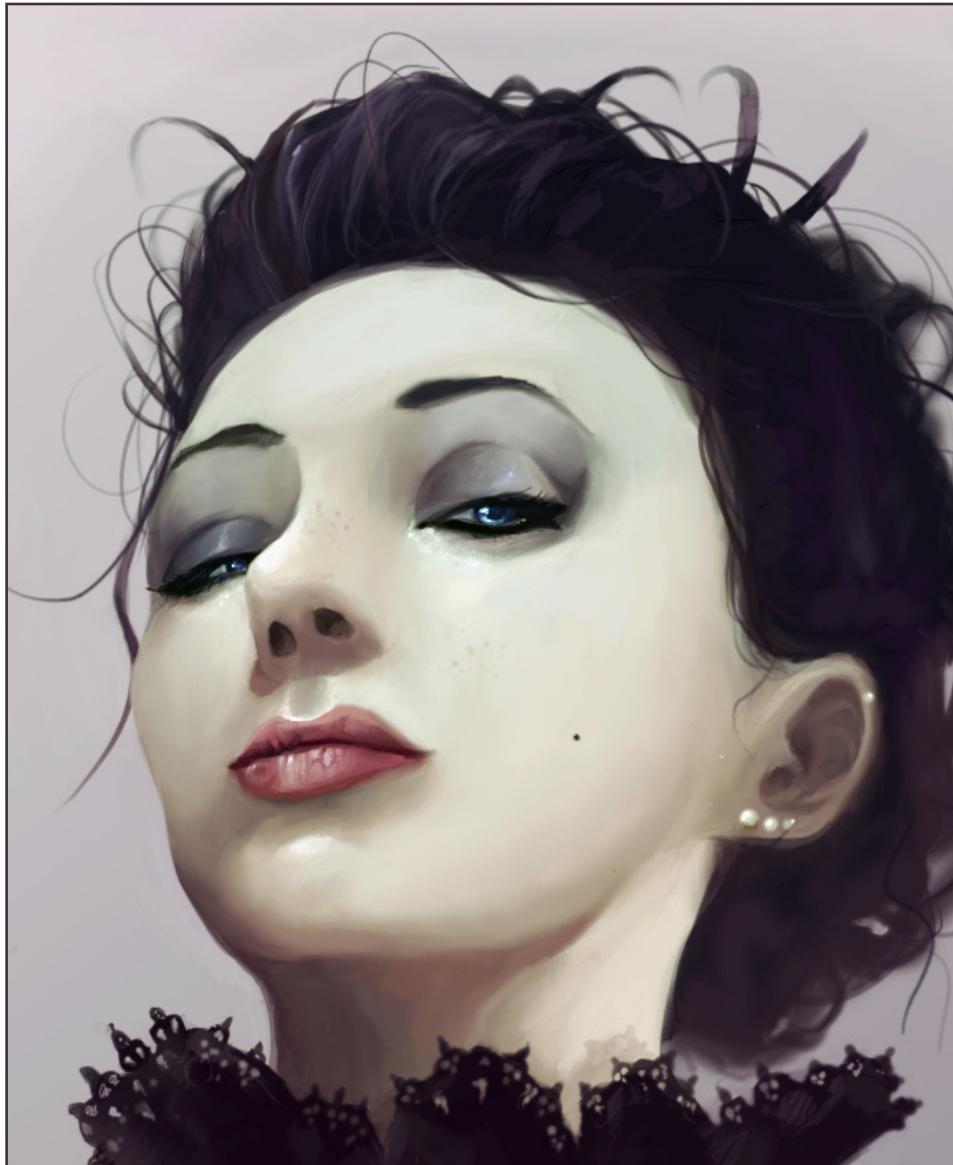
Detailing her outfit, and tiny details

To me, it's the small details that can really bring a picture to life. Whether it's a tiny freckle, an earring, or whatever else comes to mind, it





can change a picture in an instant. Even a tiny strand of hair across her forehead makes her appear innocent, whilst a raised eyebrow makes her look more mysterious. I start to detail the outfit now, adding a nice fringe to the edges of the turtle neck. To do this, I used a hard brush, but set to pressure. I first dabbed in the same colour as the background to get the little embroidered fringes. Then I used a size 3 hard brush, still set to pressure but at 80% opacity, and added in the little holes here and there. I then added some earrings to her left ear, and continued to shape out her arms and body.

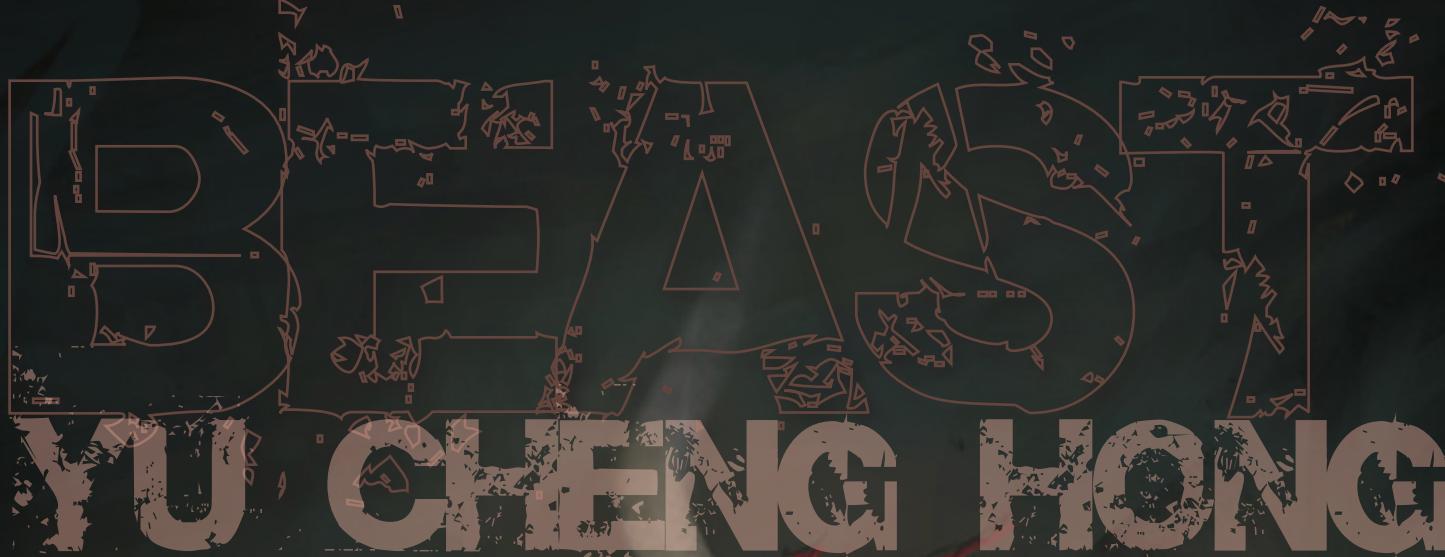


Final Fixes and steps

This is the final step of the picture. What I did first was to move her eye a little closer to her nose than it was before. I fixed up her nose a little bit - adding more of a curve to the tip of it. I added more streaks of hair, as I explained earlier in this tutorial, just to make her hair a little wilder and not so "secretary-like". I then changed the overall colour of the picture, by duplicating the image, setting it to overlay, lowering the opacity and messing with the colour/hue. After that, it's up to you to define your own details and make any touch ups. That's it!

Adonihs

More work from this artist can be found at :
<http://adonihs.deviantart.com/>
and contact them via: dmxdmlz@aol.com



This is the Making Of 'Beast' - a simple way to show
how I painted this concept in Photoshop using
simple layer and lighting techniques...





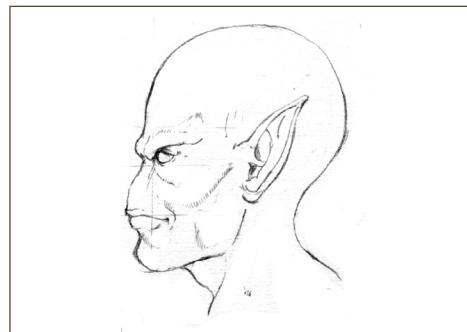
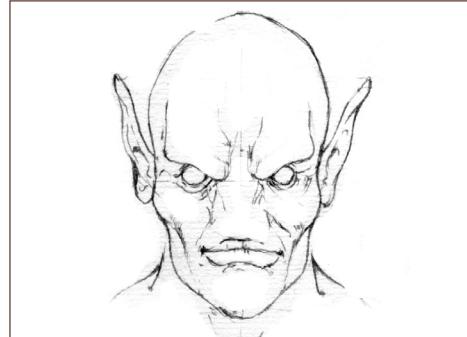
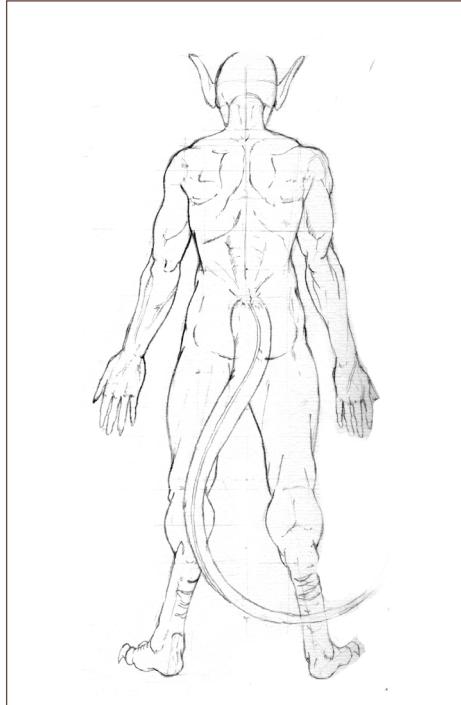
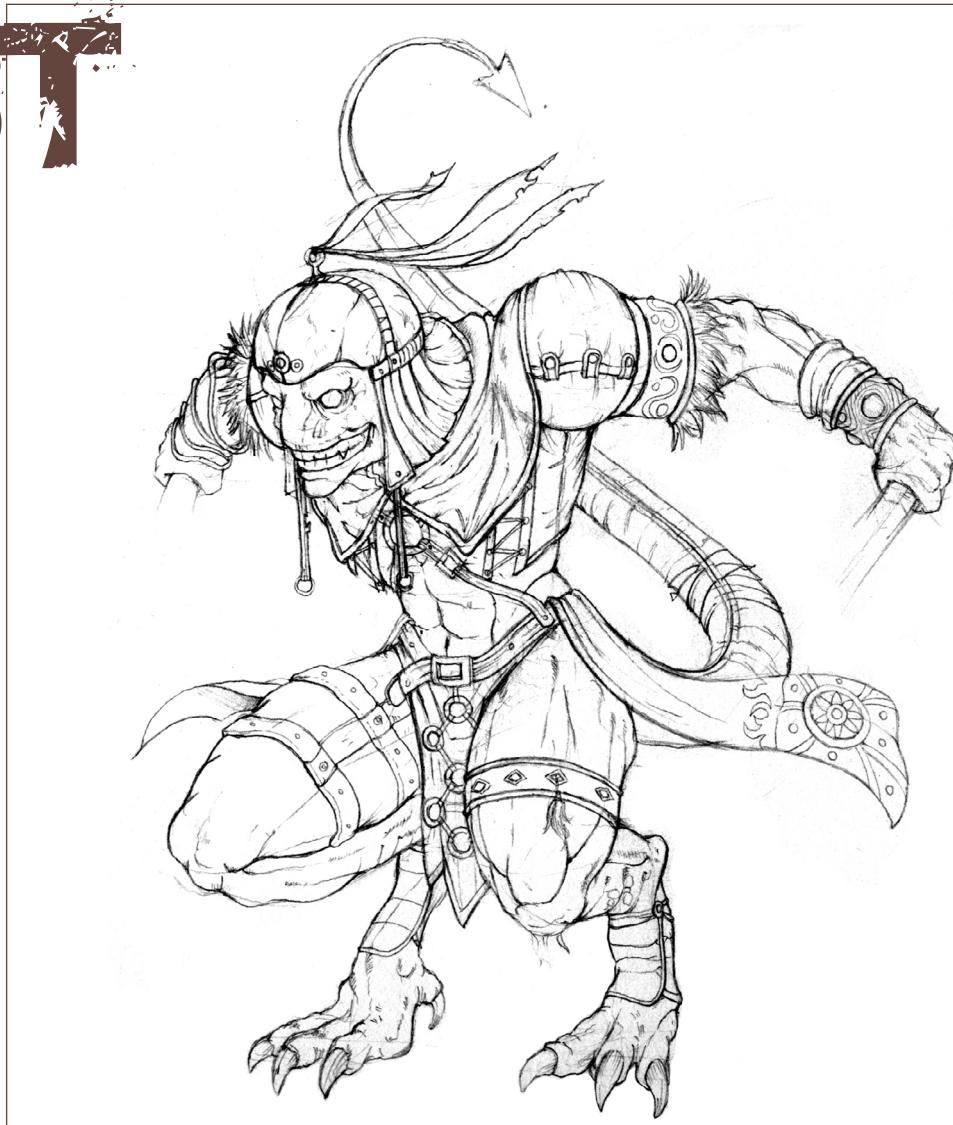
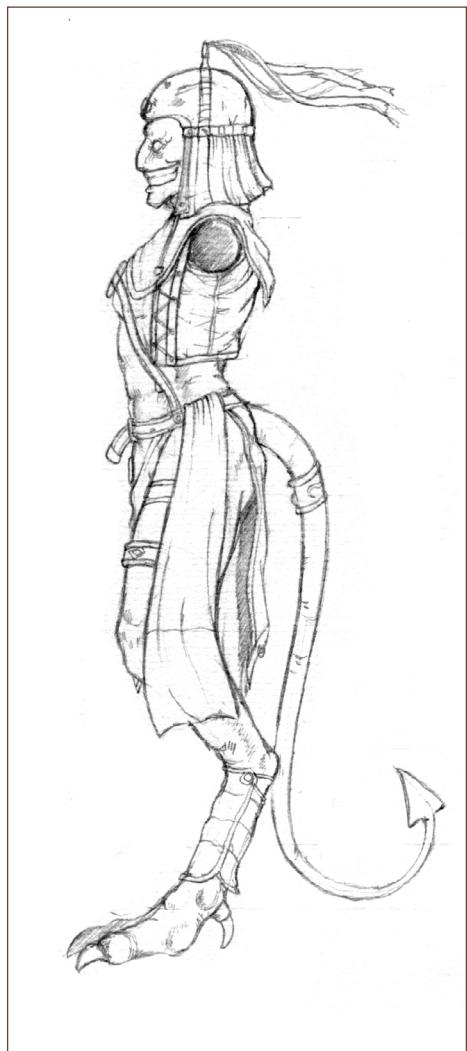
BEAST

Introduction

In this "making of", I will share with you how I painted my "Beast" concept. There are many ways to achieve this, however, I will be showing you my favourite method...

Sketching and Concept

This character was a game character and it was presented as a 3D version in a cinematic game. About the beast; it lives in the Middle Ages and has powerful and rapid strength to make an attack. So, I began by thinking about the figure of the "beast" and sketched several angles of different views for modelling, then scanned into Photoshop and painted them in Photoshop 7.





The making of *The Beast*

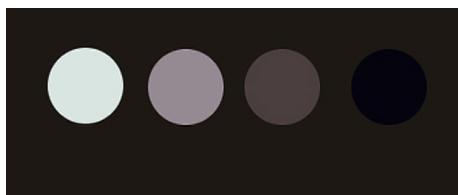
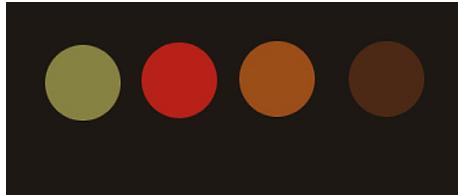
Tools used

Here are the tools I used. As usual, I used Photoshop "Custom Brush" to paint:
 "Brush Tool"
 "Smudge Tool" - to blend colour



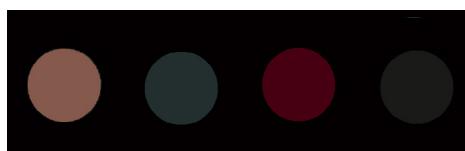
Choice of colour

I chose a blue-purple for the skin and red, brown and green for the clothes. For the arms and equipment, I used black and white colours to shade, then used "colour balance" to apply the colour. I then decided to make the skin colour nearly desaturated, so you can see my colour palette choice is not very saturated. I decided that a mauve colour would highlight the area of the skin, with purple for the dark / shadow areas. I chose grey-green, red and brown colours for clothes and leather.



Painting the background

Second step. I've been thinking about what I want the character of the painting to be, what type of lighting and where is the light from, then I start to paint the background first. In this step, I knew I wanted my background to look darker, with a dreary gray, blue and brown colour. Here I work out the general look that I'm aiming for. This is the background colour palette I used.

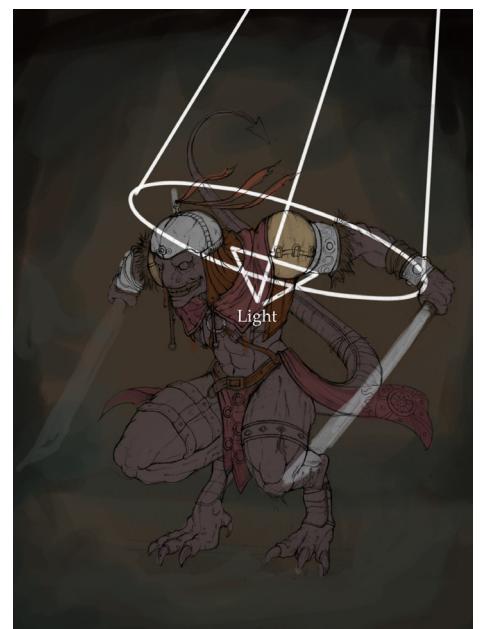


Here is the result, and the sketch line is on a "Multiply" layer above.



Setting the light

In this step, I considered what type of light I wanted and where from. It's like, if you're in a 3D program, what type of light you want to choose; spotlight, direct light, or point light, depending upon the mood that you want to achieve. When drawing, I always think if it's in 3D, placing the light and where the shadow will be dropped, and where the rim light is from.



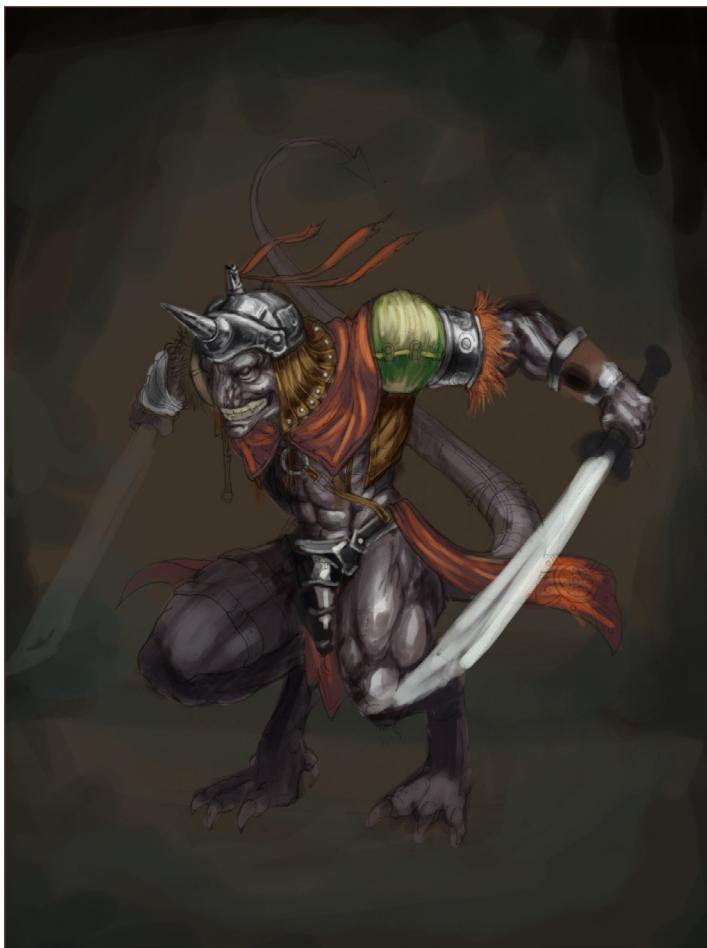
Colour blocking and Layers

Since I already decided upon the light source, now I can start to add blocks of colour and details, depending upon the direction of the light source, and can work out where the muscles, clothes, and arms are.

Here I want to explain why I paint the background first. It's just like painting in watercolors, or in oil. In Photoshop, with 50-90% opacity of your brush, painting on the background, you will find it will help your character to immerse from the background. Here I separated 3 layers, one is skin, another is clothes, and the other is arms. It's more convenient if I am not satisfied with the colour and want to change. I always use Burn and Dodge Tools to make shadows and highlights, playing with the "opposition", checking the perspective and proportion. I used "Colour Balance" to apply the colour for the helmet and



The making of The Beast





The making of *The Beast*



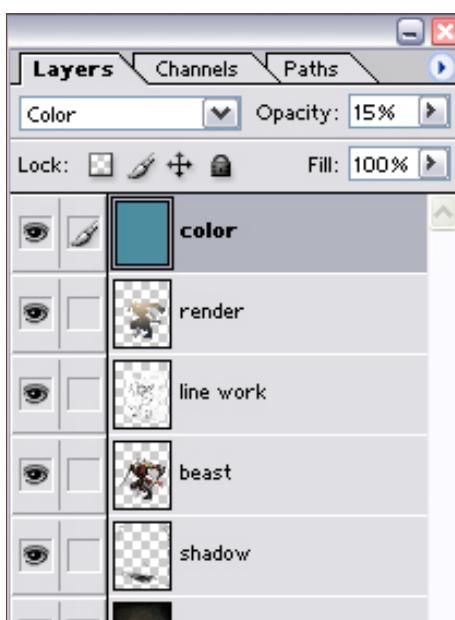
ams, and "Filter>Noise>Add noise" to make the bump.

Render

Now, having finished all the detail work and combined all the layers, I add a new layer in "Overlay" mode. Using the "ramp" to simulate the light colour, I chose yellow for highlights and blue for reflected light.

Harmonization

I added one more "Colour" mode layer and chose a blue colour to fill the whole canvas. With opacity at 15%, the purpose is to allow the picture to be cooler and the same tone, but you can use "colour balance" to do this as well.



Final

The final result! This is a simple idea about how I work.

Hopefully it will be helpful for you. Any comments/critiques are welcome. If you have any good ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact me.



The making of The Beast

Beast Concept

More work from this artist can be found at:

<http://web.my8d.net/digiflyart/>

And you can contact them via:

beziermix@yahoo.com.tw

Making Of by : Yu Cheng Hong



BEAST

CONCEPT DESIGN BY YUCHENGHONG [HTTP://WEB.MY8D.NET/DIGIFLYART/](http://web.my8d.net/digiflyart/)
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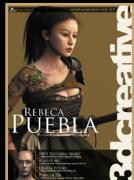
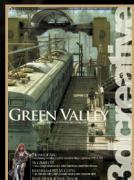
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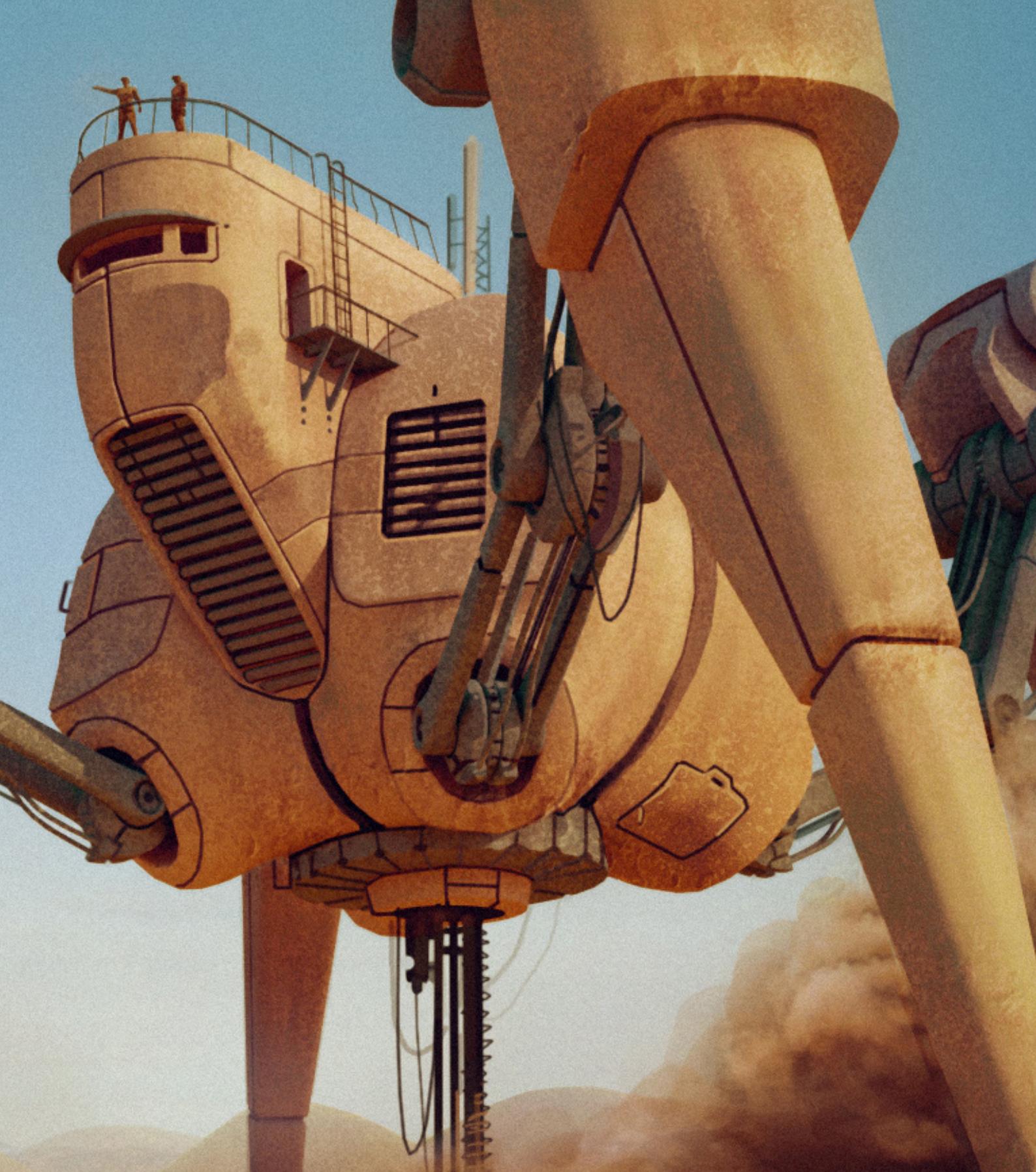
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MINING MACHINE

TOMAS MULLER

Learn how to create great quality artwork, in relatively short time, as Tomas Muller shows us how to combine various methods to make his Mining Machine...



MINING MACHINE

Firstly, I would like to point out that the techniques used to create this concept contain some components and aids made in 3D software. To follow my way of working, it's important to be able to work with any kind of 3D software, and have advanced skills in Adobe Photoshop. This tutorial will explain effective principles on how to get easy and quick ways to create high quality concept paintings. I hope this will inspire some work of your own...

Adjusting composition and references

Personally, I like to combine available digital means; painting with a digital tablet in Photoshop, matte painting and using 3D objects as a reference. It's the best way to get the best quality in a short period of time. It is applicable for concepts, final pictures, and for illustrations. To begin, I generated a very simple low-poly 3D model. Before rendering, I am trying to find the best position for the machine that agrees with my vision of the final composition.

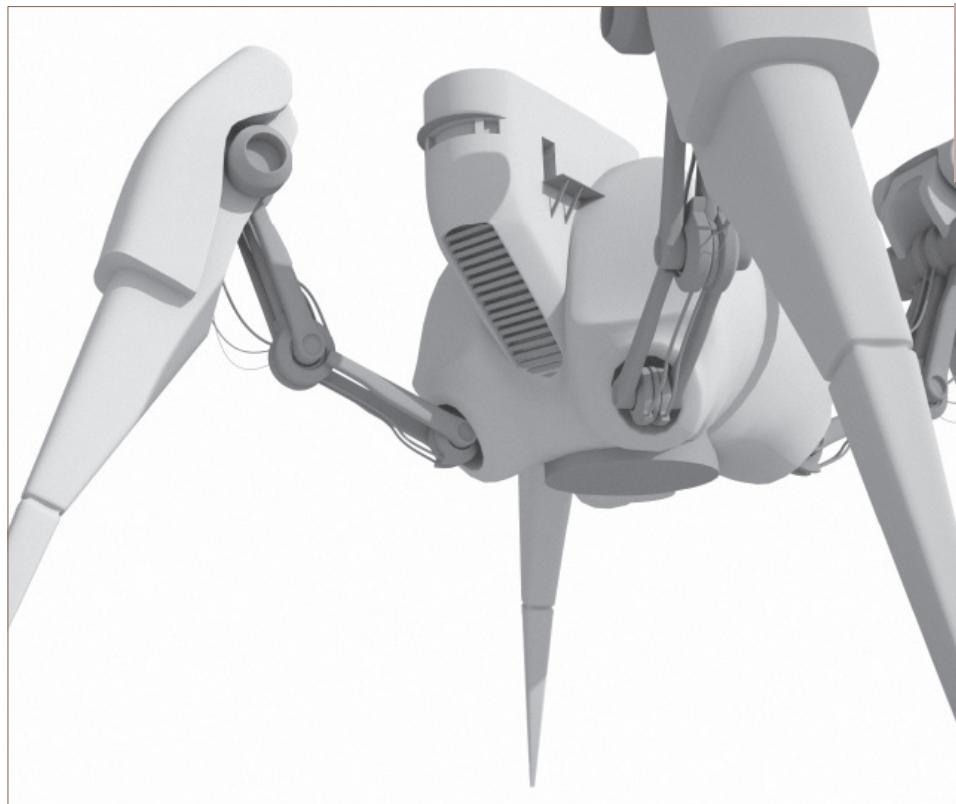
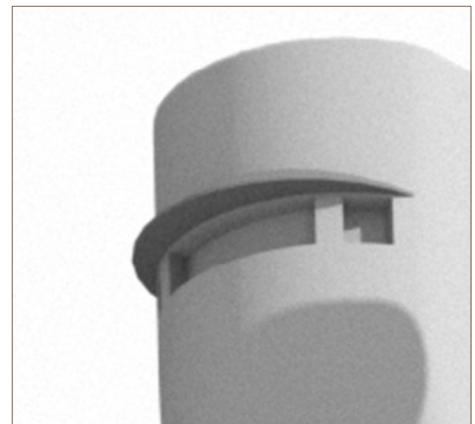


It's possible to add some guidelines and perspective lines, in Photoshop, to the rendered scene. Using this aid covers many advantages - it performs the function of the first sketch, where I draft the composition, perspective and lighting. For a person who has just a little experience with 3D software, this way helps a lot, and will of course improves the final look of the picture. If you cannot, or don't want to, use 3D sc then you can use your own way. This is rough 3D model that I used as a reference. (I'm not going to do a tutorial how to model in 3D, my only remark is tl would probably take a person who is go 3D software about 30-45 minutes to mal

Note: Don't forget to render the image with alpha channel - you'll avoid complications with masking the scene manually.

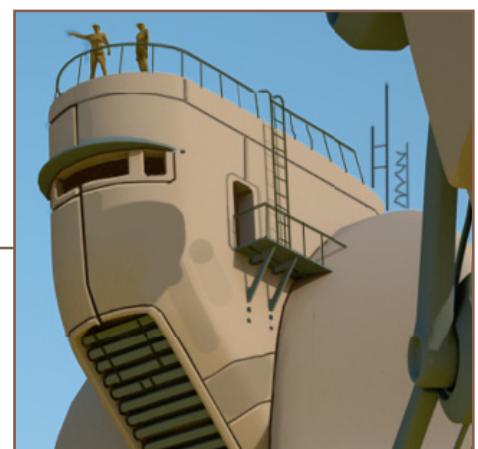
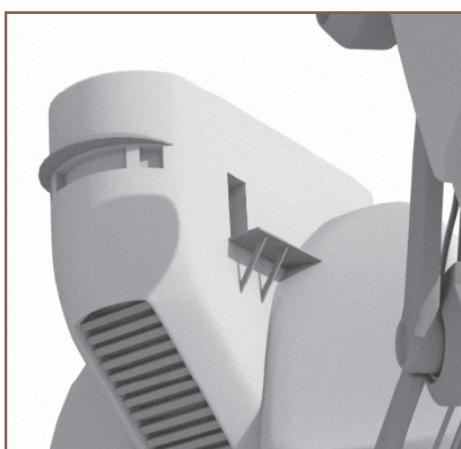
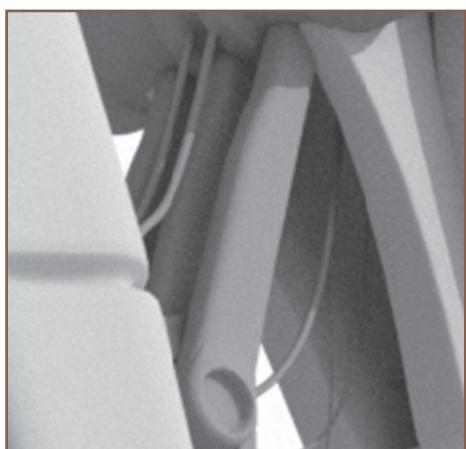
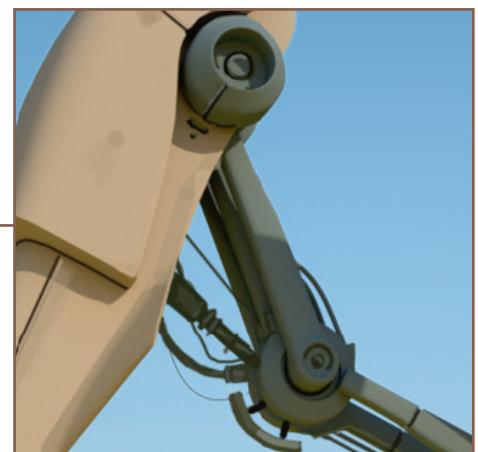
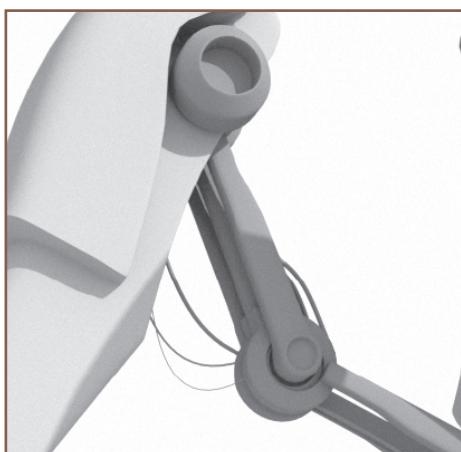
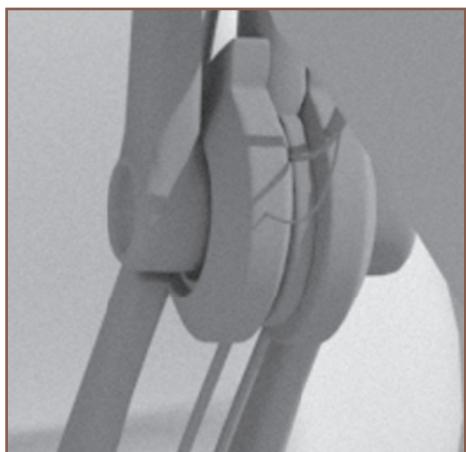
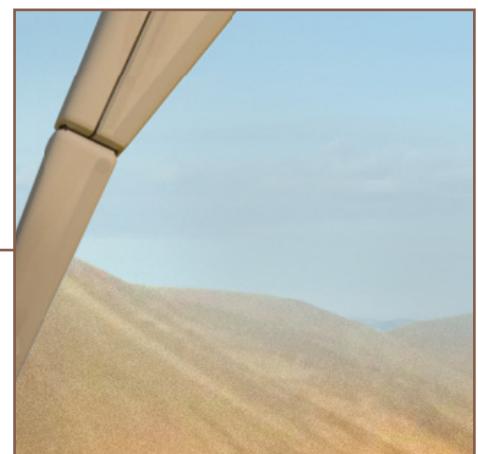
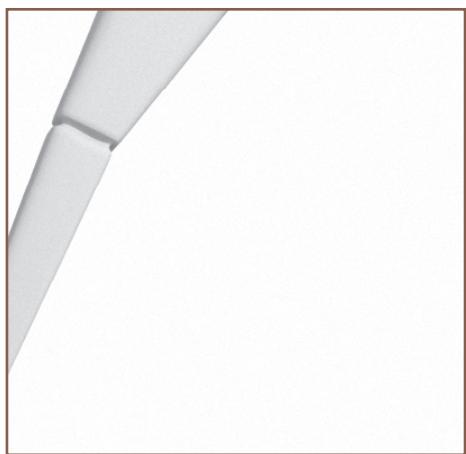
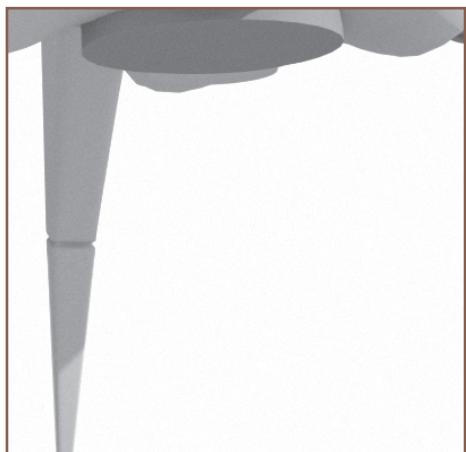
Painting and adding details

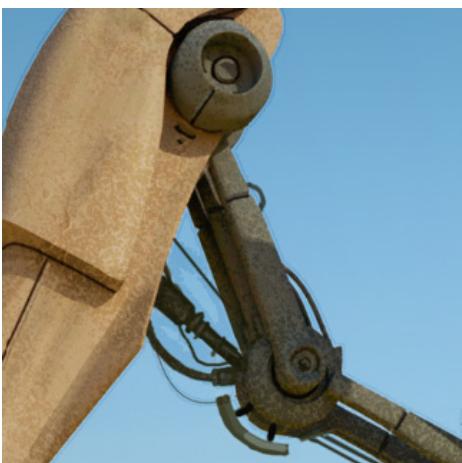
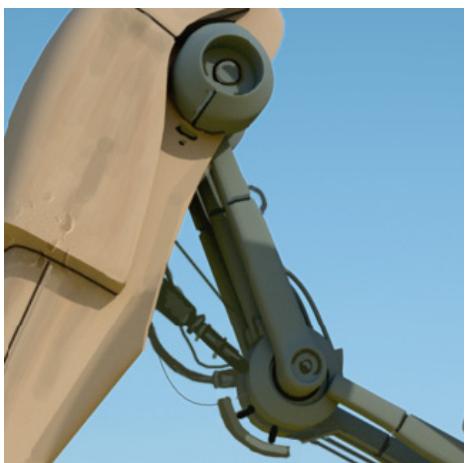
Now I focus on some picture examples, with descriptions of the most necessary operations in this stage of work.





The making of Mining Machine

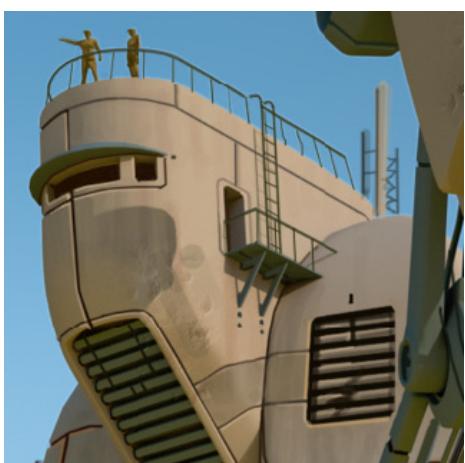




Textures, modification on reflections and shadows, add additional effects; smoke, clouds.

Creating the smoke

For the smoke, which exhales from under the working machine, I used a photo as reference.

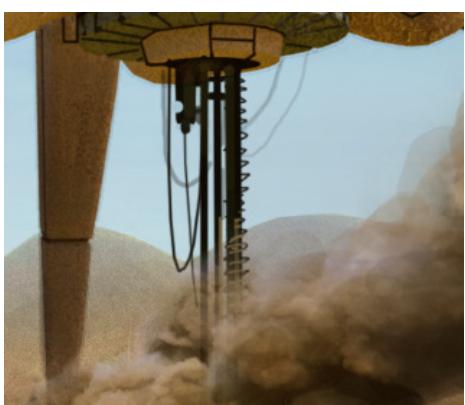


Basic shape of drift.



Finishing off the drift and shadow of smoke.

Dropped shadow and colour-corrections.





The making of Mining Machine

After finishing all of these operations, I reached this outcome.



Colour correction

So here is the picture (fig.09), which has everything sorted. But there is still something missing - it needs the contrast adjusting slightly. We need to do some colour-corrections to unify separated components and adjust the atmosphere intensity, which the picture should irradiate. By using picture duplications, colouration and various diffusions among colour channels, we can get more credibility and final look of the whole image.

Note: In nature, a black colour is never 100% black, therefore it's good to reduce black in shadowed areas just to darken colours that the picture already contains. Here is an example that I had in mind. Finally, we have reached the end. Here is the final concept after colour-corrections. I hope you have enjoyed the tutorial and have found some good advice. Best of luck with your own projects!



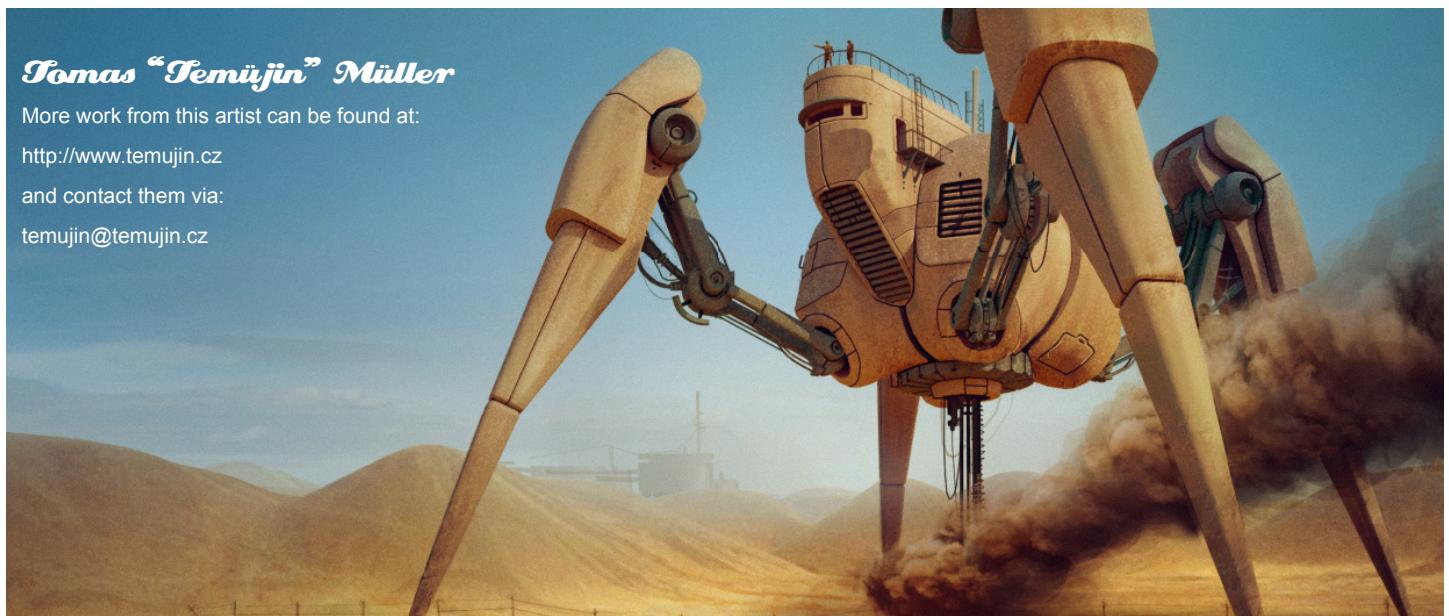
Tomas "Temujin" Müller

More work from this artist can be found at:

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